THE
METAPHYSIC OF EXPERIENCE
VOL. IV.

THE

METAPHYSIC OF EXPERIENCE

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IN FOUR BOOKS.

VOL. IV.

CONTAINING BOOK III., CHAPTER VI. AND LAST,

THE FOUNDATIONS OF ETHIC.

AND BOOK IV.

THE REAL UNIVERSE.

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.,
39, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON,
NEW YORK AND BOMBAY.
1898.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WYMAN AND SONS, LIMITED,
FETTER LANE, E.C.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF ETHIC.

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§1. But now to turn to a larger and more arduous theme. In entering on the subject of Ethic we at once rise to a greater height of abstraction, and see spreading below us a far larger area, than that which is limited by the special class of desires which bound the horizon of poetic imagination. The whole province of volition or voluntary action, in its character of choice between alternatives to be adopted and acted on, has now to be surveyed. I mean as distinguished from its function of contributing to the acquisition of knowledge, in which it appears as an element in thought governed by a comprehensive but still particular purpose, that of knowing, and in which it therefore falls into the province of Logic. It has been already shown, that these two characters of volition, and consequently of voluntary redintegration which depends upon it, exhaust the whole field of conscious voluntary action; and therefore, that Logic and Ethic are the only two sciences of practice which are strictly necessary to Philosophy; Poetic having a jurisdiction which it holds of Ethic as its suzerain, over a province appropriated out of Ethic's wider dominions, although within

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that province it is supreme; just as even the pursuit of knowledge, so far as volition is involved in the decision of pursuing it, is subject to the approval of the moral conscience.

Accordingly, the cardinal and ultimate distinction between the domains of Logic and Ethic, as practical sciences, is this, that Logic speaks of the ways in which we must think, if we would avoid error in thinking; Ethic of the way in which we must choose, if we would avoid blame in choosing; both thinking and choosing being necessities of our nature. And not only are both of them necessities of our nature, but they are inseparable one from the other; it is only by abstraction that they can be sundered. When we call the domain of Logic *thought or reasoning*, and that of Ethic *practice or conduct*, we do so only by conceiving thought as perpetually choosing a particular end, namely, knowledge or truth of fact, prior to comparing and judging facts, and practice as perpetually comparing the preferabilities of alternative actions, prior to the action of choosing between them. No thought is possible without volition, and no volition possible without thought.

Practice works, then, we may say, on the lines of thought, so far as thought is necessary for conceiving and comparing actions in point of their preferability, actions which it represents as still future, and alike possible, at the moment when we have to choose between them; the refraining from any positive action being, of course, counted as one of the possible alternatives. Voluntary practical choice without some element of logical thought is an impossibility. To mark this fact, we may speak

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of practice itself (in its immanent department) as practical thought or reasoning, thereby opposing it to purely logical thought or reasoning, the *differentia* of which latter, from this point of view, will then consist in its renunciation of all motives save one, the desire for knowing *de facto* truth, or in other words the submission of its volitional element to the tutelage of pure fact, without making that volitional element itself the object of its judgments. The two lines of action or thought thus distinguished may often, for the sake of brevity, be designated the *practical* and the *speculative Reason*, without thereby hypostasising them, as Kant is thought to have done, as separate faculties of the mind, capable of leading to antagonistic conclusions.

There is, then, in all practice or practical thought, a basis of known fact or law, upon which the choice of alternative actions proceeds. At the moment of making any such choice, and thus adopting by volition any of the alternative actions represented as possible, we are reflectively perceiving or looking back upon our own already acquired experience, and are about to enter upon a new, and as yet future, experience, which we are aware will be partly our own creation. We ourselves, as self-conscious beings, are part of the Course of Nature; and in adopting an alternative action we determine the Course of Nature for the future (dating from the moment of choice) so far as we, the acting Subjects, are concerned, and so far as the rest of the Course of Nature is modified by our action. The moment of practical self-conscious volition or choice is thus a moment of reflective

perception anticipating a new experience, the occurrence of which we know ourselves as contributing to determine; and this latter circumstance is the *differentia* of those self-conscious actions, which are the object-matter of Ethic.

Now just as Logic in its practical department, or as a practical science, builds upon and applies the conclusions of its analytical department, or of itself as a science of practice, with the purpose of rendering thought more efficient as an instrument in the attainment of *de facto* truth, and of obviating or correcting the errors and fallacies which arise in concrete reasoning, so also Ethic in its practical department, or as a practical science, builds upon and applies the conclusions of Ethic as a science of practice, that is, the conclusions of its own analysis of practice, so far as this has not been done already either by Logic or by Poetic, the latter of which, as we have seen, takes a special department of practice, namely, the pursuit of imaginative gratification, as its province, a pursuit which must itself have been allowed and approved by principles recognised and established by Ethic. And Ethic builds upon and applies the conclusions of its own analysis of practice, that is, of the processes of practical thought or self-conscious choice of alternative actions, for the purpose of comparing and criticising the motives which originate, and the maxims which formulate, the various kinds of choice which may be made, so correcting its errors and illusions, and rendering it a more efficient instrument in actually modifying for the best the Course of Nature, and first and foremost the actions and character of the practically choosing

Subject. Both sciences are of practical applicability, and both are founded on an analytical and theoretical basis, by which alone their practical monitions can be justified. Both also are sciences of what is called introspection; that is to say, are based ultimately on facts of consciousness immediately perceived by consciousness reflecting on its own experience; and thus come into being only in and through self-consciousness supervening on acquired knowledge, in which some knowledge of the self-conscious being as a real agent is necessarily included.

For although Ethic is thus a creature of self-consciousness, it does not follow that self-consciousness makes its first appearance on the scene of voluntary action in Ethic. We reflect upon, discriminate, and judge our acts of choice, without necessarily appealing to Ethic at all, and have done so long before we ever heard of it; and mankind has done so before Ethic came into existence. These acts of reflection, discrimination, and judgment passed upon our own acts of choice, are clearly acts of self-consciousness, since they are moments of reflective perception having prior acts of reflective perception and choice together, not (it may be) consciously recognised as acts of choice at the time of their performance, as their objects. The self-consciousness which discriminates such acts of conscious choice, and selects them as its special object-matter, is probably long subsequent to the simple performance of acts of conscious choice, and certainly long prior to its own recognition as an essential part of the special object-matter of Ethic, by a further exercise of self-

consciousness. But all acts, whether of conscious or of self-conscious choice, whether of volition or of criticism of volitions, are acts which desires have contributed to determine; and in this character, therefore, all alike are liable to revision and criticism by later acts of self-consciousness, reviewing them in the light of further experience, or of deeper insight into the inter-action and composition of motives.

Now all such acts of self-consciousness, whether earlier or later, and whether their judgments are retrospective only, or are passed during, and as part of, deliberations, for the purpose of guiding the acts of choice then on the point of being made, are summed up under the name of *Conscience;* the true meaning of which term is thus ascertained to be the reflective perception of the character or nature of the Subject's own acts of choice or volition. Conscience is therefore no transcendental faculty, wholly unique in its attributes, but is simply a mode or case of reflective perception or experience, which, as we have seen in Book I., includes all moments of actually experiencing anything whatever. Or to state once more the same thing more briefly, Conscience is self-consciousness having volitions for its special objects.

Without self-consciousness of this kind, that is, without conscience, there could plainly be no Ethic, since the judging Subject could then possess no experience of individual character; or in other words, Ethic, which is the science of Character (ἦθος or ἤθη) which includes much more than the transeunt or overt actions of men, could not exist. But it is also true, that Ethic, as the science which systema-

tises all processes of practical thought, is not only dependent upon conscience in Subjects for its own existence, but also includes it as part of its object-matter. There is no contradiction in this. One act of self-consciousness, it is obvious, can be reviewed by another; and self-consciousness as a whole is clearly not a single act *unum numero*, but includes a whole class of actions, and is *unum numero* only as a class. There is, however, a great difference between self-consciousness in its function as conscience, and self-consciousness as employed in Ethic, having conscience among its objects. The function of conscience is to judge and to guide the Subject's own volitions; it is a function directly practical, and confined to the practice of the individual who is its Subject. The purpose of Ethic on the other hand, like that of all sciences, is proximately to know, and for that purpose to analyse the facts of individual practice; but this again is for the ulterior purpose of guiding individuals in their practice, supposing they are inclined to avail themselves of its aid. In no case can Ethic stand in the place of conscience to the individual. Whether he takes account of Ethic or not, his own conscience is the supreme tribunal which decides, without appeal to anything but itself again, on the merit or demerit of his actions.

From this it is evident, that we have first and foremost to do with Ethic as a Science of Practice, secondly with its application, or Ethic as a Practical Science, or Art of Living, and thirdly with the Practical Action or Conduct, which is the object-matter of both branches. The practical action, which is the object-matter, furnishes the given facts

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or data to be analysed, and the analysis is the foundation of the theory of Ethic as the science of practice; the results of which theory are then applicable to guide actual conduct in the future,—a guidance which belongs to the practical department of Ethic. It is not conscience in the unrestricted sense, but only the so-called logical conscience involved in all self-conscious reasoning, which is employed in this primary analytical work, which belongs to purely theoretical science; conscience in the full, which is also the proper, sense comes in only in the character of object matter to be analysed. It is with this only that we are primarily concerned in the present Chapter. Its application by individuals to guide their own practice, in which conscience proper is necessarily employed,—and which is the condition of its further application to establish a system of morality, or rules of moral conduct common to all members of a community,—will only be noticed incidentally. Nevertheless the field which this second department, or practical science of Ethic, occupies may be briefly indicated, by comparing the two extremes between which it mediates, analytical science on the one hand, and actual practice on the other.

In the analytical branch, or Ethic as the science of practice, the main distinction laid bare by analysis is of theoretical import, the distinction between Duty and Prudence as principles of conduct. In Practice (the conduct, of which Ethic is the theory) the main question is a practical one, the question between Principle (whether duty or prudence) and Passion or Inclination. The latter question is the supremely important one for the

man himself; the question between the two ways, the narrow which leads to life, the broad which leads to death. These two questions, the practical and the theoretical, must be kept carefully unconfused.

What is involved in the practical question is a trial of strength, a struggle for mastery, between acts which form the habit of obeying Principle, *i.e.*, the dictates of better knowledge, and acts which form the habit of obeying the strongest Inclination, irrespective of better knowledge. Principle here, or in this connection, means—Reason after deliberation; Passion here means Inclination after deliberation, but irrespective of its result. I say after deliberation in both cases, since otherwise the act would not be an act of choice or volition, and therefore would not concern us here. The habit of obeying Principle is usually called having a strong will; the habit of obeying Passion or Inclination having a weak will. For since will includes deliberation, and deliberation involves reason, it is open to us to designate by *a strong will* the alliance or coincidence of reason and volition, with the result of mastering opposing inclinations, and evoking new ones in their place.

Yet this nomenclature is correct only on the supposition, that we speak from the point of view of conscience. To many persons it may seem, that the natural alliance of volition is with inclination, reason being its natural opposite. A strong will would then mean the habitual coincidence of volition with inclination, with the result of overpowering or even obliterating the dictates of reason. The usual name, however, for a will of

this sort is Self-will, and strong self-will is not usually a term of approbation. We are restricted to these two alternatives in characterising the action of volition by its strength, since will *per se* is an abstraction incapable of the attributes of strength and weakness. To speak either of a strong or a weak will, without reference either to inclination or to reason, involves hypostasising abstract volition, and has no positively realisable conception behind it.

Returning to Ethic as the Science of Practice, the main question which it raises is the theoretical one: How do we distinguish right or good practice from wrong or bad? I state the point quite generally. Is there a knowable difference or criterion between them, and if so, what is it? In approaching this question it is plain, that we must first of all consider what is involved in all practical action simply as such, and then secondly take up the question of good or right practical action, as distinguished from bad or wrong.

Now all practical action whatever has some End or Good in view; and also has some Motive or Desire impelling it; and also consists in choosing between one motive, desire, or line of action, and another, that is, in following one course and dismissing another.

But also, since the end or good is a represented object, it is an object of desire, so that end and motive coincide in the desire for it. And since practical action is choosing, and choosing means consciously adopting one course in preference to another, the good which from whatever motive, whether of principle or inclination, and whether as

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realisable in the present, or realisable only in the future, by thwarting present inclination, is felt as greatest, or as we commonly say appears greatest, at the time of choosing, coincides with the motive which actually determines the choice, that is, with the motive which at the time is strongest. So that our strongest motive always leads us to choose that line of action which, at the time of choosing, either appears to be, or appears likely to procure, the greatest good.

At the moment of actually deciding in choice, there is no test of what good appears the greatest, or of what motive is the strongest, except the fact that one thing is chosen and not another. That which is actually chosen is that which, for that reason, we say has the strongest felt motive, or is the greatest apparent good, these two characteristics being coincident. For if the good which we actually choose appeared less than that which we actually reject, the choosing it would fall out of the definition of simple practical action, which always has some end or desire in view, and would be a wholly non-rational act. It is, therefore, in order to treat of actions as conscious acts of choice, that we distinguish apparent from real good, and consider apparent good as always coincident with the strongest motive and with the end actually chosen. To repeat, the choice of the greatest apparent good is involved in practical action simply,—prior to any question being raised as to right practical action, or as to the greatest real good. That is to say, it is necessarily rational, in the sense that it includes a comparison of motives.

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Still keeping to Ethic as the science of practice, we can now see precisely how and why it is, that its main question is that of the Criterion. Failure and disappointment in practical action soon lead us to ask, How are we to distinguish right practical action, or action which will realise the greatest real good, from wrong practical action, or action which will not realise it,—both being necessarily rational action, and both being necessarily directed to attain the greatest apparent good? This is asking in other words, What is the criterion of right action, that is, a mark or test knowable *in præsenti*, pointing out the action which *in futuro* will procure the greatest real good?

Two things here are at once evident. First, the test sought for must lie in the perceived nature or relations of the alternatives offered to choice, as distinguished from the fact of actual adoption and rejection. Secondly, the verification of any test proposed by Ethic must consist in the fact, that repeated comparison of acts done in obedience to the test proposed with acts done in contravention of it, or in obedience to any other principle, tends to confirm the judgments which, judging by the test proposed, we pass on those acts at the time of choosing or doing them. I mean, that there is no other proof possible of one thing being really preferable to another, than what is included in the fact, that we sooner or later confirm a prior judgment of its preferability by a subsequent one; since, *ex hypothesi*, no standard of preferability is given originally or *a priori*, by accordance with which the truth of a present judgment of preferability can in the present be ascertained. A standard of the

truth of such judgments is the very thing of which we are in search, under the name of the *Criterion.*

But in what, then, can the Criterion, if any, consist? It clearly cannot lie either in the greatness of the apparent good, since this is the very thing to be tested, or in the greatness of the real good to be attained by the action, since this is itself the thing not yet known, but to become known by the criterion. When independently of such evidence the greatest real good seems to be known in the moment of action, it is only the greatest apparent good projected by imagination into the future, for the reality of which as greatest some present evidence, termed the criterion, is precisely our *desideratum.* Neither can it lie in the greater strength of the motive, which coincides with the greatest apparent good, and determines the fact of the actual adoption of that alternative. It must, on the contrary, be something which is capable of guiding the choice, that is, of altering our estimate of good, and changing the relative strength of our motives; something which can make us consider one good greater than another, or can make one motive stronger than another, which might not have been so, or have been thought to be so, without that new element guiding the choice.

So far then is clear; the greatness of the apparent good, and the strength of the motive, are necessarily excluded from being part of the criterion of right action, or action which realises or tends to realise the greatest real good; the reason being, that all action possesses these features alike, or that they belong to it simply as *de facto* practical and rational action. No consideration that one apparent good

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is greater than another, nor the fact that one desire is stronger than another, can ever make the action which they dictate *right*; nor the opposite consideration or the opposite fact make it *wrong*. Strength of motive or desire, and greatness of apparent good, are therefore wholly extraneous to the quality of known or perceived rightness or wrongness in actions. Their justification never lies simply in the apparent greatness of the good at which they aim, or in the strength of the motive which impels their performance. One action is not morally better than another because it aims at a greater apparent good, either for the agent or for others. The apparent greatness of the good, in which general determination must be included the greater number of the people, or sentient beings, for whom it is sought to procure it, has nothing to do with justifying the action as right. These are circumstances wholly indifferent to its being known as right or wrong, or as an action which leads to the greatest real, as distinguished from the greatest apparent, good, since the final issue of action is always *ex hypothesi* unknown, being the very thing for which a criterion applicable *in præsenti* is sought. That a conscious action, known *in præsenti* to be right, if there is such a knowledge, will lead to the greatest real good, is matter not of Knowledge but of Faith.

We see, then, that Ethic, in consequence of its analysis of self-conscious actions, adds the more definite conception of a Criterion to those of Ends, Motives, and Reasons arising in comparison of ends and motives, which three conceptions are sufficient to render practical and rational action

intelligible as a *de facto* process. Its scheme of ultimate concepts is accordingly, not End, Motive, Reason, but End, Motive, Criterion; a *criterion* meaning some single kind of reason, which it is always in our power to apply *in præsenti*, selected as a standard or test by which to judge conscious actions in respect of their true preferability, or in other words, as morally good or bad, right or wrong. The conception of a criterion gives greater precision to the three cardinal conceptions commonly in use, End, Motive, and Reason taken generally. For both the contrast between real and apparent good comes out more strongly by contrasting different kinds of reasons; and also in desires, the nature of desired ends can thereby be more clearly distinguished from the efficacy which the desires possess as motive powers. In fact we shall find in the criterion a means of judging, not ends and motives only, but the reasons which may be given for pursuing some ends, and allowing weight to some motives, in preference to others. It may be said, that the main purpose of Ethic as a practical science must be to establish some single criterion of right, in lieu of a multiplicity of conflicting reasons. And if so, it follows, that the main problem proposed to Ethic, as a science of practice, is the discovery of such a single criterion. But this, it is obvious, can only done, if we can succeed in laying bare, by analysis, its actual foundations in the essential nature of volitional and self-conscious action.—I laid the threefold distinction of End, Motive, and Criterion, at the basis of Ethic, in my *Theory of Practice* (1870), Book II., Chap. I., though I had, at that

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time, a comparatively imperfect grasp of the subject.

From this preliminary sketch of the nature of Ethic it is evident, that its main and fundamental task will be to ascertain, by analysis, first, the nature of acts of choice, and secondly their relation to the judgments of conscience. We have to enquire *what* acts of choice *are*, as immediately known to us, or *qua* acts of choice; that is to say, to give their analysis as states and processes of consciousness in terms of consciousness; and the same with the discriminative perceptions, or judgments, of conscience. But before entering on this analysis, it is necessary to recall the relation which subsists between all states and processes of consciousness and their real Subject, agent, or proximate real condition. In Ethic we have to do with the psychology, as well as with the metaphysic, of acts of choice and of conscience; we have to do with their real conditioning as states and processes of consciousness which are *existents*, as well as with the content by which they are immediately known. The real agent, or proximate real condition, of all consciousness taken as an existent, is the living neuro-cerebral system, including its operations or processes. Upon these the process-content of consciousness in all its branches, including those now before us, is dependent; which fact of dependence makes it evidence, so far as it goes, of their nature, being indispensable as a means of distinguishing and analysing them.

The great question, in which we have directly to do with the efficient action of the neuro-cerebral system, is the question of Free-will. But besides

this, and in all cases alike, we have to speak of neuro-cerebral action in terms of the consciousness which depends upon it, or rather include it along with process-contents of consciousness, whenever we speak of these as displaying energy or activity; in short, as I have elsewhere expressed it, "the books must be kept in terms of consciousness." It must, then, be remembered, that, when we speak of acts of consciousness, or of conscious motives, we are really speaking of acts and motive forces of the neuro-cerebral system, which support, determine, and are evidenced by, process-contents of consciousness which are known to be of this or that nature. The real agency is not in the consciousness, but in the neuro-cerebral system.

This doctrine which I here recall to remembrance from earlier Chapters, is essential as the foundation of any solid and valid ethical theory. It shows that consciousness of every kind is dependent on, and determined by, neuro-cerebral action, which goes on as well when consciousness does not attend it as when it does; by which I mean, that neuro-cerebral action, even when not accompanied by consciousness, may be a co-determinant of subsequent consciousness along with that neuro-cerebral action which co-exists with and supports it; or again in other words, that neuro-cerebral action may precede, as well as co-exist with, the process-contents of consciousness which depend upon it. Thus the consciousness of acts of choice, instead of being the originator, is really the evidence and record of the selection of one out of several actions, originally perhaps instinctive and unconscious, of the neuro-cerebral system, when

they come into collision, actions which may come to be accompanied by consciousness either before or immediately upon their collision with one another. Cerebral actions which may have been unattended by consciousness, for some time prior to a given moment of conscious choice, contribute to furnish, as it were, the lines upon which that conscious action subsequently runs, since the cerebral action, upon which the conscious choice immediately depends, may be action modifying some unconscious action previously existing. The importance of this for any tenable theory of Conscience can hardly be over-estimated, as will be seen when we come to the question of Free-will, in a later Section.

It moreover supplies us with an hypothesis, that of the storage of energy in cerebral organs which have been habitually used, by which to explain, *inter alia*, the immense importance of discipline and of exclusively repeated ideas, in increasing the efficacy of the cerebral mechanism in particular directions. It enables us also to see how inevitable it was, before the advent of a physiological psychology, to hypostasise the Will as an immaterial agent or faculty; inasmuch as in volition we seem to operate immediately upon ideas or representations, while we have no immediate knowledge of the real innervation-process, by which we either imagine, think, choose, or move our limbs or other bodily organs. If we want a definition of the Will, it may now be supplied from a psychological source; we may define it as an exercise of nerve-energy accompanied by the sense of choosing between alternatives; that is, of retaining in consciousness one of two or more representations,

until the energy (by means of efferent or quasi-efferent action) produces a presentation, which either is, or is perceived as involving, the realisation of the retained representation.

The doctrine is, of course, in complete accordance with the doctrine of evolution in biology, of which psychological evolution is a special case, arising whenever sentience or consciousness in any shape supervenes upon vitality, and the Subject becomes a sentient as well as a living being. We thus see the immense importance for Ethic, as well as for other provinces of experience, of those cardinal distinctions which have been insisted on throughout this work, namely, (1) between consciousness as a knowing and as an existent, (2) between consciousness as an existent and its real conditions. Ethic in fact depends first upon the due discrimination, secondly upon the due combination, of elements which belong to metaphysic on the one side, to psychology on the other.

No theory which disallows or fails to adopt the former of these metaphysical distinctions, namely, between consciousness as a knowing and as an existent, can be or contain a tenable theory of Conscience, as a function passing valid moral judgments upon real acts and agents. The distinction affords the indispensable basis for the conception of truth in judgments, apart from their verification by facts of experience, other than the fact of subsequent judgments, similar in kind, being passed confirming them; and this kind of verification, we have already seen, is impossible in the case of judgments of conscience. For not to distinguish in a judgment, what it is as a judgment, that is, as

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a knowing, from what it is as an action, that is, as a *de facto* existent, is to reduce it, prior to its verification, to the rank of a *de facto* action; and therefore, in the case of the moral judgments of conscience, to take away all ground for attributing to them any insight into the true nature of the actions which they seem to judge, that is, any validity as moral judgments.

We may, it is true, pass one judgment to-day, and another reversing it to-morrow. But since no distinction is or can be drawn, on the theory supposed, between what the judgment is as a knowing and what it is as a *de facto* action, such reversals can show nothing but the inconsistency of the agent with himself. There is no reason for holding either of the judgments better or truer than the other, both being alike *de facto* actions of the same agent. And thus the judgments of conscience would lose their jurisdiction, as judgments, over real acts as acts of volition; and along with it that accompanying sense of *de jure* validity, which is an essential property of these judgments, as we actually know them; the truth being, that in these real judgments of Conscience we have, not instances only, but sources of moral validity, and indeed of the very conception of *de jure* as distinguished from *de facto* existence.

The full justification of this criticism can be given only by the analysis which is to follow. To complete the outline of the province of Ethic, which is the purpose of the present Section, it remains only to distinguish it from the practical sciences which pre-suppose it, and which stand towards it in relations similar to those in which the

subordinate branches of the Fine Arts, and the technical processes employed in them, stand to the general science of Poetic. All practical sciences aim at directing the forces of Nature to produce some state of things called an End, which would not be produced, or not so well, without them; and this it is which distinguishes them both from positive sciences, and from their own analytical departments, the aim of which is to discover and know the facts and laws of Nature as they actually are, without directing them into new channels. Thus Logic in its practical branch aims at purging ordinary thought from errors and fallacies, and making it more efficient as an instrument in the discovery of truth. Poetic in its practical branch aims at cultivating the imaginative powers employed in the production and appreciation of works which gratify desires of imagination. And similarly Ethic in its practical branch aims at instructing and invigorating the powers of discrimination and volition, employed in adopting or rejecting desires of any and every kind, Thus all alike aim at producing some form of well-being, which without them would not come into existence; and all alike aim at it by first modifying for the better some of the powers or capacities of conscious Subjects. Their primary action is upon the Subject's own powers, and then, through the Subject, upon his environment, organic and inorganic.

Now discrimination between desires, and adoption of some, rejection of others, which together constitute volition or choice, are processes which take place within the neuro-cerebral system and the consciousness which immediately depends upon

it. Like thought and poetic imagination, they are immanent, not transeunt or overt, action. But volition or choice, which is always the adoption or rejection of some desire, is also immediately manifested *ad extra* (unless some other immanent volition restrains it) by some efferent neural action, which, by playing upon muscle or some other physical tissue or organ, gives rise to transeunt, ending in overt, actions, such as expression of the eye, speech, gesture, and other bodily movements, by which an effect is produced upon the Subject's environment. Both kinds of volitional action, immanent and transeunt or overt, belong to the domain of Ethic; but immanent volitional action, which immediately depends upon discrimination, and immediately gives rise to transeunt or overt action, belongs to it in a more intimate and essential manner than action of the transeunt or overt kind. It is not only that part of the whole action which contains the source and real condition of the other part, but it is also the only part of which the Subject has exclusive and immediate cognisance. The Subject's overt action is manifest to others as well as to himself; but of his immanent action others have cognisance only by inference from his overt actions or omissions, that is, mediately, and not immediately as he has.

This distinction between immanent and overt volitional actions is of cardinal importance in demarcating Ethic in both its branches from the practical sciences which are its immediate dependants and subordinates, such as, Jurisprudence, Politic, and Sociology. These sciences deal with overt actions only; and, so far as the overt actions with which they deal are voluntary, they deal or

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ought to deal with them always in subordination to Ethic, and with reference to the scale or system of Ends, which it is the province of Ethic to determine. It is true that, in determining the scale or system of Ends, Ethic is bound to take account of facts belonging, both as overt acts and as conditions and consequences of acts, to the domain of these and other sciences bearing upon human welfare. But this does not make Ethic subordinate to those sciences, when it and they are considered as practical sciences. It is a knowledge of positive facts which Ethic derives from them, not a knowledge of their relative worth or value in the scale of practice. It is as practical not as positive sciences that they are subordinate to Ethic; and that in this character they furnish many facts, of which Ethic must take account in determining its scale of Ends, makes no difference in their relation to Ethic as the dominant science of practice. What is best to do, or right to do, or what ought to be done, as well as the precise meaning of such terms as *best*, *right*, and *ought*, is determined ultimately by self-consciousness having volitions for its objects; of which self-consciousness Ethic is the analysis and systematisation.

Many writers on what they imagine to be Ethic take no account of the distinction between practical and positive sciences, and pay small regard even to that between immanent and overt actions. They take man and his actions together, or in the concrete, as it is called, which really means taking him as conceived by common sense and by positive science; regard him in connection with his environment, organic and inorganic; and thus

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treat him primarily as the object-matter of anthropology, ethnology, sociology, politic, jurisprudence, and psychology, without distinguishing the practical side or character of these sciences from their positive side, and before applying the positive knowledge so acquired to throw light on the nature of the moment in which man's self-conscious and voluntary actions have their origin. His "morals," as it is phrased, are considered to be determined, almost in their entirety, by what he is as a physical and social being. He is supposed to act from the influence of motives, and to aim at ends or the satisfaction of desires, and to select by volition those ends which seem to him most desirable, and those means which seem best adapted for attaining them; but all this without the questions being once put, How his notion of the relative value or worth of ends originates, and, How his discrimination between them is performed. The nature of desire, preferability, and choice, is taken as something *per se notum*, and therefore as requiring no analysis.

In consequence of this empirical way of treating the phenomena of conduct, we readily identify the motive which is strongest at the moment of choice, and which coincides with the greatest good apparent at that moment, with the pleasure felt at that moment to be the greatest; without considering that, unless we discern the reason why the greatest felt pleasure comes to coincide with the greatest apparent good, and so becomes the strongest motive, we have no ground whatever for discerning a moral character in the choice made; and consequently may dispense with Ethic at the same

time as with analysis. Not to mention the admitted fact, that a painful choice does not cease to be painful when made from motives of duty, so that it is a mischievous confusion of terms to speak of such a choice as determined by the pleasure felt to be greatest at the time, or by the preponderating pleasure which we feel in making the choice. It is a contemptible artifice to call the motive, which, for whatever reason, proves strongest at the moment of choice, the greatest felt pleasure at that moment, merely because it occupies the place which pleasure occupies in a great number of cases. Two senses of the term *pleasure*, in one of which it signifies *pain*, are as bad as the two senses, in vogue with some Hegelians, of the logical term *universal*, in one of which it means a *complex singular*.

But even supposing it granted, that acts which give the greatest pleasure at the moment of adopting are the only ones ever actually adopted, this would be no justification of all actually adopted acts indiscriminately, which is one form of what Hedonism is designed to prove. Nor would it show, that such acts were incapable of justification or condemnation from a moral point of view, which is the other form of the same design. For the simple reason, that the greatest pleasure, from its identification with the greatest apparent good, and with the strongest motive, can characterise actions solely in their *de facto* and not in their *de jure* aspect. Now the ideas of moral right and wrong are founded in the nature of self-conscious action too deeply for uprooting by so feeble a device as that of calling motive power *pleasure*.

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Two ethical doctrines are from the first involved and implicitly assumed in this empirical procedure; one, that Ethic is necessarily a system of Eudæmonism, Hedonism, or Prudentialism; the other, that the *de facto* character of actions is the sole ground of their *de jure* character; or in other words, that their *de jure* character, or what they *ought* to be, as distinguished from what they either *are* or *will be*, is an illusion. The line of thought so determined is probably somewhat as follows. Let us first see, it is said, what Man has been hitherto, what he now is, and what, both socially and individually, he is capable of becoming; we shall then be in a position to judge what it is most desirable that he should become, within the limits of those capabilities. This is called treating Ethic by the historical method. It is really making it a positive science, instead of a practical science based upon a science of practice, thus altogether changing its true character. What it really aims at is a scientific history of Civilisation, or as the Germans call it *Sittlichkeit*, with practical applications, to suit the temper of the times, or the social theories of the writer. Ethic it is not. The question of the *justification of desire* is therein wholly shelved.

The metaphysical method makes war on all unanalysed assumptions, and therefore on the gross assumption (with its consequences) involved in treating Ethic as a positive instead of as a practical science based upon a science of practice, which is done when it is treated in the wake of, and made subordinate to, the sciences named above. Those who treat Ethic in this way may possibly succeed in showing, what kinds of ends or desires are

actually selected and made dominant, or tend to be so, by different persons, and different societies, at different epochs of civilisation, and under different circumstances or conditions, such as training, personal influence, climate, geographical position, neighbour societies or nations, minor differences of locality, and so on. They might even, conceivably succeed in showing a virtual consensus of civilised man, with regard to the final state of human society which is most desirable. And usually they conclude by giving their own opinion, duly supported by reasons drawn from history, as to what is the preferable course for a man to follow, under the given conditions of their own time and country. But the strictly ethical question,—what is the nature of the selective act, or what the *differentia* of the preferable, the good, or the right, as attributes of actions,—this question they do not touch, nor even come in sight of, since it is covered and hidden by their original assumption, that preferability is something *per se notum*, and indeed familiarly known, prior to the comparison of its different kinds and degrees, with which alone, therefore, so they flatter themselves, they have to deal.

But there is one way, and only one, of dealing satisfactorily with the problem of Ethic, and that is the way of subjective analysis without assumptions, which is the highway of Philosophy in all its branches. The questions (1) whether there is a right and a wrong, a morally good and bad, as well as an æsthetically or emotionally pleasurable and painful, and (2) what criteria we have for distinguishing the comparative preferability of

different ultimate ends, can be answered only by analysing acts of choice simply as such,—that is to say, analysing the process-content of consciousness in representing alternative actions and resolving on one of them,—noting what are the specifically different elements which compose the process as a whole, and what are the relations which they bear, both to one another, and to the proximate real conditions on which they severally and conjointly depend.

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§ 2. In order to keep the phenomena with which Ethic deals clearly before us, let us begin by imagining some act of choice of a simple and ordinary kind, so as to be as little embarrassed as possible with mere accessories, and see what essential features it contains. Suppose, then, that I am a man of business, hard at work for the greater part of the year, but now entering on a well earned and much needed six weeks holiday. How shall I spend it? A mountaineering expedition to Switzerland or the Dolomites takes strong hold of my inclinations. But the thought occurs to me, that my elder sister, who is somewhat of an invalid, and by no means in affluent circumstances, would be greatly benefited and not a little gratified, if I were to suggest going with her to some humdrum seaside resort in England, which otherwise she would not have the means or the inclination to visit. The question is, for which alternative shall I decide.

It is simply an immanent act of choice that is now before me. What elements are present in coming to a decision? First, there are plainly present the two represented contents, the two

representations of the foreign and the home holiday. Secondly, there is the process of comparing the two contents in detail, with the view of deciding between them. Thirdly, there are the consequences attaching to either alternative, that is, their relations to other parts of experience, past or anticipated, which are brought out into distinct consciousness by the process of comparing the alternatives, and which contain the reasons for deciding. And fourthly, there is the act of decision itself, or the decisive adoption of the one alternative and rejection of the other.

This, I think, is a complete enumeration of the essential elements distinguishable in the supposed process-content of consciousness, considered in its character of an act of choice or immanent volition, although they are in real experience so bound up with one another, especially if I waver long between the alternatives, that it is impossible to describe one without employing words which imply the presence of others. The process of pure conceptual thought, analysed in Chapter IV., is also involved throughout, making the concrete process one in which we constantly return to the perceptual form of redintegration or representation, though with its contents enriched by the additional knowledge acquired by means of that conceptual but now subsidiary process. Moreover under the second and third heads there is introduced the whole series or network of ideas and feelings, which are associated with the two contents named under the first head, all of which may be brought into the process-content analysed, by dwelling on those two original contents. The features consti-

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tuting the whole process, including the associations of the original contents, thus drawn out under four heads, which describe in general terms its essential elements as an act of choice, are in actual experience "telescoped," if I may use the word, into one another; we experience them partly simultaneously, partly in succession; and the beginning and end seem to be much nearer together than in the detailed enumeration. And all of them stand in relations to one another, which, owing to their complexity, it would be almost impossible to describe in language.

It is, however, necessary to attempt this in the case of the four comprehensive elements which are essential to the process as an act of choice. That is, the relations of these elements to one another must if possible be assigned, in order to complete the analysis of the act. In doing this we shall have to take account of the psychological side, or real conditioning, of the act, as well as of its metaphysical side, or analysis of it as a process-content of consciousness, and show the relation in which these two sides stand to each other. I will take the four elements in order.

1. The two original contents. Each of these is suggested psychologically in spontaneous redintegration, the foreign tour supervening upon some train of thought which was previously alone in possession of consciousness, and the home tour supervening upon the foreign, in conjunction with the previous train. Each suggestion, therefore, has similar psychological conditions, and they continue together in consciousness in such a way, that I am aware of them as two contents, of different

character, alternating with and apparently tending to displace each other. Each content has its own character as a content of consciousness; each in its own way is pleasureable; each has its psychological condition in some living energy of the neuro-cerebral system which supports it; and what appears as the tendency of each to displace the other must consequently be ascribed to some conflict, or opposite behaviour of some sort or other, on the part of the neuro-cerebral processes which support them, say an increase of energy in the one, accompanied by a withdrawal of energy from the other.

2. The process of comparison. The conflict being supposed to continue for a certain time, without the energy supporting either content being able to overcome the other, the apparent tendency of each content to displace the other, which depends upon the conflict of energies, rises into consciousness as a distinct secondary fact; that is to say, the consciousness of the relation of the two contents to each other becomes the object of self-consciousness, and, urged, as it is said, by the discomfort of their opposition, I adopt the idea of coming to some decision between them. This itself, supposing it to intervene, is an act of volition preliminary to coming to the final decision. At the same time, the neuro-cerebral energy supporting each content diffuses itself, thus redintegrating or bringing back into consciousness the ideas and feelings associated with it, and making its character, conditions, and consequences, manifest to thought. Each content in turn is in this way seen, or may be seen, if the comparing process continues to its utmost length, as connected with the whole life and circumstances of

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the Subject, and the question of further dwelling on and so adopting it, or rejecting it in favour of some other content, or of its original rival, is fairly posed. It must also be remarked, that this comparing process includes acts of thought and reasoning which are also, on that account, acts of volition and choice, and are subsidiary to the main purpose of arriving at a decision between the two original alternatives. They are what may be called the accessories of the main act of choice under analysis. The same remark applies also to the weighing of reasons, for and against the main decision, spoken of under the following head.

3. The reasons for deciding on either alternative are found partly in the pleasurable character of each alternative, taken simply as belonging to the process-content of consciousness, (without here attempting to distinguish the pleasure which may belong to it as process from that which may belong to it as content), and partly in its associations, or necessary relations with the rest of the Subject's life, as represented in the process of comparison by ideas and feelings of its conditions and consequences. These are strictly reasons, that is, *causæ cognoscendi*, or evidence of the comparative desirability or preferability of either alternative. They are part of the process-content of consciousness as a whole. They are not themselves part of the living neuro-cerebral energies by which the alternatives and their comparison are supported ; that is, they are not in themselves motives which tend to make either alternative actually prevail ; they are states and processes of consciousness concomitant and dependent on those energies.

4. Lastly we come to the act of decision, adopting one alternative and rejecting the other. The process of comparison, including the perception of the reasons for and against adopting either alternative, rests, like the alternatives themselves, upon neuro-cerebral processes. What we call comparing and weighing reasons are processes of consciousness dependent on these neuro-cerebral processes, and are the evidence of these latter being engaged in the adjustment and settlement of their original conflict, evidenced by the opposition of the alternatives. The associations which each conflicting neuro-cerebral process calls up are evidence of its spreading to other parts of the brain, and being either re-inforced or weakened by the neuro-cerebral processes which it sets up in those other parts. In this way the action of the whole, or of a comparatively large part, of the brain is brought to bear upon the comparatively small part implicated in the original neuro-cerebral processes sustaining the alternative contents of consciousness. And whenever a point in this action is reached, at which the action of the whole, or of the larger part, or of any single cerebral process belonging to either, is weighty enough in volume, or vigorous enough singly, to suppress or withdraw energy from the action of the smaller part supporting either of the original alternatives, that point of suppression is the moment of what we call the act of decision, which rejects the suppressed alternative and adopts its rival. Or again, the same point and act of decision may be reached by the whole, or the larger part, of the processes called into play by the comparison, or of some single cerebral process belonging to them,

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re-inforcing one of the original alternatives, and so giving it the victory, not negatively by suppression of its rival, but by positive addition to its own strength.

In either case, we have the occurrence of a distinctly perceptible act of decision; and this decision appears to be given, when we look at it as belonging to consciousness only, by means of an appeal to the representation of some larger experience, an experience possibly extending to the whole life, character, and circumstances, of the Subject. It is really given by the neuro-cerebral energies which support that representation. It is signalised in consciousness by what has been well called by Professor W. James the *click* of resolve; though it is quite possible, that this conscious *click* may not be strictly simultaneous with that decisive change in the distribution of energies which is the act itself, but with the completion of the first stage, so to speak, in the new distribution, a stage marked by the cessation of the sense of effort or tension, which accompanied the as yet undecided conflict. In this case, it would depend immediately upon what we may call an *afferent*, though intra-cerebral, nerve current; and the turning-point in the act, which is the act itself at the instant of decision, would then not be represented by any single simultaneous feeling in consciousness, though previously and up to it we have the feeling called sense of effort, a feeling which depends upon the tension or conflict subserving the process of comparison, and after it a heightened consciousness of the alternative adopted, with disappearance of the feeling of conflict and effort.

If any one should here tell me, that he has an immediate consciousness of himself as an immaterial agent making reasons the real motives of his acts, I can only say that, to me, his meaning is not intelligibly construable to thought. His statement, taken literally, is a contradiction in terms. To my apprehension, he is making the common-sense terms, in which the *analysandum*, the act of choice as it appears to common sense, is described, serve as the analysis of the act, which is merely denying that it can be analysed. If that were so, we could have no Ethic and no Philosophy; and, if I am not mistaken, it was the idea that such an immediate consciousness as this was absolutely requisite for what he was pleased to call Psychology, which led Auguste Comte to deny the possibility of that science. For, take the statement non-literally, as in common parlance, and it is not analytical; take it literally, as in philosophy, and it is self-contradictory. I mean, that the knowing anything to be an agent, being an inference, cannot be a piece of immediate knowledge. The statement therefore is only true in a sense which is not philosophical, and yet is put forward as embodying a result of philosophical examination. It therefore effectually bars all further philosophical thought, and still more discussion. But to return to the analysis before us.

It still remains to point out explicitly some further distinctions which are involved in the four essential elements above described, and to bring them into comparison with the principal categories usually employed in describing volitions, which are those of End, Motive, and Reason of preferability, in voluntary acts, though most commonly without

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any accurate discrimination of reason from end or from motive.

The case which I have imagined as object of analysis will, I think, be granted to be a fair representative of acts of immanent volition generally. But it must be remarked, that it is not by any means an instance of volition in its lowest terms, nor intended to illustrate the origination of volition out of spontaneous redintegration. This has been already done in more than one place of previous Chapters. The present instance is supposed to be taken from the midst of the life of some one to whom acts of choice have long been familiar. We begin indeed by showing its connection with spontaneous redintegration, by showing, under the first head, what the alternatives are, between which the choice is to be made; and thus the act analysed really begins with what I have called a preliminary volition, namely, a volition to come to some decision or other between the suggested alternatives, and then the process of coming to that decision, and adopting one of them, is made the special object of analysis. The forming of the preliminary volition is not here analysed, but merely indicated. Were it to be analysed, it also would be found to be an act of choice, the rejected alternative being to refrain from comparing the two rival contents, but allow the strongest to prevail as it might.

The volition which we have analysed may be regarded either as a volition complete in itself, but founded upon a previous volition to come to some decision or other between the alternative contents, or as an act included in and executing that pre-

vious volition (just as an overt act of volition may be said to execute a previous immanent one), which it can do only by adopting one of the alternatives and rejecting the other. In either case it is an instance of the truth which I wish to bring out, so far as a single instance can support it, that conscious acts are in strictness the only Ends of acts of choice or volition. We can only *will* what we have the power to *do*. Sometimes indeed the volition takes the form of a resolve or resolution to maintain a certain line of conduct, say to abstain from alcohol, for some fixed or perhaps indefinite period; and this resolve we may in the event be unable to keep. Here the thing said to be willed is indeed a conscious act, the abstaining from alcohol; but it seems as if we had *not* the power to do what we have willed. Nevertheless this case is no exception to what I have stated as the fact. For in fact we *will* the resolution only; that is, we adopt it as our own resolution *in præsenti*, but with the tacit reservation, *if we possibly can*, and therefore only as an essential first step, and an indispensable aid, towards carrying it out actually *in futuro*. And this actual performance must consist, if at all, in a series of subsequent and separate volitions, or acts of choice, executing the original volition or resolve, every one of which may have to be performed under very different conditions from those under which the original resolve was taken. Thus every act of volition extends no farther than it has self-executing power.

At other times the deed follows the will instantaneously, both in acts wholly immanent, as in selective attention to an idea or thought, and in

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acts partly immanent and partly overt, as in striking a sudden blow. The volition may then be said to execute itself immediately, without the interposition of a comparing and judging process, as in the case before us; and the volition and its execution will then constitute together a single volitional act.

The adoption of one of the rival alternatives, in the volition analysed, is the End or τέλος of its process of voluntary selection. It consists in attending to the content of the selected alternative, and keeping it up unopposed. It is true, that it is a desire which we select to gratify. But it is not as a desire that it is the End of action. We do not will the satisfaction of a desire what we will is the adopting and indulging it. As desire it is a motive, but not an end. We make it an end in and by the act of decision which adopts it. Ends thus depend upon volitions for their existence as ends, not volitions upon Ends for their existence as volitions. Or rather, *End* is a term which characterises volitions in their completion and accomplishment, whereas *Volition* suggests the beginning and origination of a forward-looking action. And thus it is that the ends adopted are evidences, or *causæ cognoscendi*, of the moral character of the volitions which adopt them, and through the volitions, of the moral character of the agent.

True, volitions are founded on and spring from desires; and of the content of desires we are immediately cognisant. But desires arise spontaneously; and apart from their being adopted by volition, or from having become habitual in consequence of volition, have no moral character,

good or bad. It is through volition only that they acquire one. Taken alone, or *qua* desires, that is, things, or contents of feeling, desired, they are pre-moral; and become moral or immoral in and by their adoption by volition, which *ipso facto* changes them into desires to act or do something, as distinguished from desires to have or enjoy something. Gratification may be called, by analogy, the End of desires of this latter or pre-moral kind; but we never think or speak of gratifying volition by exercising it; the volition terminates in the act of choosing between desires, so making the desire chosen its End, by identifying and, as it were, incorporating it with itself, that is, with the volition which chooses it. The gratification of desires to have or enjoy something, on the other hand, is never wholly in our own power, but depends on conditions which we cannot control. I may desire to have dinner to-day, or to have it at a particular hour; but I cannot will to do so, unless other actions than my own concur to permit me, and unless I also know that they will do so.

In practical application, then, to connected trains of thought or lines of conduct, the true meaning of the term *End* is a Subject's voluntary action, immanent or transeunt, adopted by a previous immanent act of choice on the part of the same Subject. It may be an action to be performed immediately, or after the performance of intermediate and subsidiary actions, or on the fulfilment of conditions which may or may not take place. It may be ultimate, or it may be itself a means to a further end. Still, to be an end at all, in Ethic, it must either be the completion of a single volition (a

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case we are not now comtemplating), or an act to be performed by the same Subject who adopts it by a previous act of choice or volition. But the ordinary use of the term by ethical writers is far looser than this. It is usually made to mean the gratification of desire generally, irrespective of the distinction between desired actions and desired enjoyments on the part of the Subject. The distinction between ends of desires, or desired contents, and ends of volitions is one not commonly drawn. Any desirable event or state of things, simple or complex, near or remote, is usually characterised as an End, if it is considered at once as actually desired, and as capable, in certain cases, of contradistinction from other states or events, which are Means to its attainment. The distinction between ends and means has helped to obliterate that between ends of desire and ends of volition.

Happiness or Welfare, in the broad sense, Aristotle's Εὐδαιμονία, has been accordingly considered the great ultimate End of human action. But however this loose conception of the ultimate end of human action, when taken as the master-idea of Ethic, may be tempered by good sense and moderation in applying it to the facts which are the object-matter of the science,—which was pre-eminently the case with Aristotle himself,—it is obvious that it introduces discrepancy and discord into their interpretation, by including two disparate kinds of Ends, each of which may be held to be general and ultimate; and obvious also, that this discrepancy and discord are radical and far reaching in their consequences, since they are made inherent in the master-idea of the whole science.

If, aware of this discrepancy, though not fully masters of it, we should be led to fix on one of the two disparate kinds of Ends (ends of volition and ends of desire) included in the large general conception of Happiness or Welfare, and make it the starting point and dominant conception of the enquiry, we should come, in the one case, to the conception of Duty, or of Virtue, Aristotle's ἀρετή, as defined by performance of a naturally appointed ἔργον, work or practice indicated by our natural constitution and capacities; and in the other to that of Pleasure in the large sense, including enjoyments of every kind, whether sensuous, emotional, intellectual, or derived solely from the exercise of our active powers. These two courses are those adopted and represented in antiquity, one by Stoicism, the other partially by Epicureanism, and more completely by the Hedonism of the Cyrenaic school. How the selection of either course may be affected by the results of the foregoing analysis, I will not at present enquire. It will be better first to bring those results into comparison with the two remaining categories.

According to those results, Motives belong entirely to the real conditioning of consciousness, that is, to the neuro-cerebral processes, upon which all parts of the process-contents of consciousness depend. The neuro-cerebral processes, supporting an act of choice or volition like the one analysed, are functionally continuous throughout it. Those of them which support the original alternative contents, and which are themselves continuations of sense-bearing impressions received through afferent nerves, are continued into redintegrative processes supporting

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the associations of ideas and feelings, to which the reasons for and against either alternative belong. And the adjustment of these neuro-cerebral processes with one another brings with it that final turning-point, or act of decision, which, once taken, supports the alternative chosen in its possession of consciousness. We distinguish and mark the different steps or stages of this continuous brain action by the different processes or contents of consciousness which depend upon it, and which alone are immediately known to us. The whole motive power of this two-fold process resides in the really-conditioning part of it, that is, in the neuro-cerebral processes, and not in the process-contents of consciousness which depend upon them. Our real motive for choosing one alternative and rejecting the other or others, is the superior strength of the neuro-cerebral process supporting the selected alternative. But a rejected alternative has also a neuro-cerebral process supporting it with a certain degree of strength, though one which proves inferior to that of the victorious process. The question then arises, in the case of choice or volition, What feature, if any, in the process-content of consciousness is the evidence, mark, or *causa cognoscendi*, of the strength, or comparative degree of strength, of the neuro-cerebral processes opposed to each other in coming to a decision,—apart, of course, from the evidence afforded by the actual decision itself?

There are several classes of facts which seem to throw light on this question. In the first place we find, that the instinctive actions which are most essential to the preservation of the individual and

of the species are also those which are accompanied by the keenest pleasures, the action of taking food for instance; while actions which are not instinctive, but normally proceed from other agents, and are destructive or injurious to the organism, are often accompanied by the severest pains, as in being deprived of food or warmth, and in receiving bodily injuries. Secondly it appears, that the representation of pleasures which we have enjoyed, or may probably enjoy, is itself both pleasurable and invigorating, while the representation of pain which has been or is to be suffered by ourselves is painful and depressing. Thus hope, which taken *per se* is a pleasure, seems to heighten, and fear, which *per se* is a pain, seems to lower, the healthy tension and elasticity of the organism.

So far, then, as sense-presentations and trains of spontaneous redintegration are concerned, both pleasure and pain, both hope and fear, are feelings immediately dependent on and *pro tanto* characterising certain neuro-cerebral processes, whereby they fall under the natural law of self-preservation, which governs all the physiological processes which take place in living organisms. Moreover, there is nothing to show, that they lose either their pleasurable or their painful quality, when the spontaneous processes to which they originally belong are converted, by purposively selective attention, into processes of voluntary redintegration, and when in consequence they become evidences of volitional activity, that is, become *motives* in the usual sense of the word. What takes place with them in this conversion is, that they become objects, as well as sources, of definitely entertained desires, but desires

of which they are the objects in opposite senses. That is to say, the retention or enhancement of pleasure and hope, the diminution or cessation of pain and fear, are substituted for the feelings of pleasure and hope, of pain and fear, belonging to the spontaneous redintegrations from which, in the form of definite desires, that is, of motives, they are derived. And the intensity of these desires or felt motives, as feelings accompanying the actions of pursuit and avoidance, are *pro tanto* evidence of the energy of those actions. But the fact, that the feelings accompanying the volitional actions of pursuit and avoidance are derived from feelings of pleasure and pain, hope and fear, belonging to sense-presentation or spontaneous redintegration, does not show that they themselves, in their new shape as motives, are feelings of pleasure and hope only, nor even that pleasure and hope predominate in their composition. If, then, we speak of pleasure and hope as motives of action, we must remember that pain and fear are motives of action in precisely the same sense, that is as sources from which motives are derived. It is only the desires which spring from them, and which spring from pain equally with pleasure, that are strictly speaking motives, or evidence of motive power, in voluntary action.

In the next place we have the general fact, that the re-action to many stimuli of sensation is either indifferent or pleasurable when the stimuli are moderate, but becomes painful when the stimuli are so intensified as to exceed or overburden the re-active power. Facts of the kind show that all excessive stimulation is painful, though not that all moderate stimulation is pleasurable. Still they

seem to be instances in which pain alone, and not pleasure, is the direct accompaniment and mark of a high degree of motive energy in nerve action. But to understand these instances aright, it is necessary to recall the distinction between two quite different cases to which the term re-action is applied. There is (1) the re-action of an organ requisite to the reception of a stimulus, whether coming from without, or from some part or organ within, the cerebrum, accompanied by feeling of pain or pleasure, and there is (2) the re-action of an organ by efferent or quasi-efferent channels, whether upon out-going nerves, or upon some other organ or organs of representation within the cerebrum. The first or receptive re-action is in view when it is said, that any excessive stimulus produces pain. The second or efferent re-action is intended when we speak of a vigorous re-action, or energetic exercise of motive power, being attended with pleasure. Pleasure may attend an efferent re-action, quite consistently with pain attending both the receptive re-action requisite for our feeling the originating stimulus, and the receptive re-action which subserves its representation and associative combinations.

Keeping this distinction in mind, and looking first to the feelings, whether of pleasure or pain, which accompany efferent representational re-actions, we see that the re-action directed to avoid a pain may be accompanied by pleasure in its character of an efferent or quasi-efferent re-action, notwithstanding that it involves and even requires the retention, and possibly the intensification, of the represented pain, so far as that pain is dependent on

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a receptive re-action. To face or endure pain with a view to suppress or avoid it introduces an element of pleasure into the action as a whole.

Both pleasures and pains may thus be evidence, direct or indirect, of motive power in volitional acts. The degree of both alike would be proportional to the vividness with which they were represented, and the vividness with which they were represented would be proportional to the energy exercised by the neuro-cerebral processes supporting the representation. At any rate this would hold true within the limits of healthy re-action, that is to say, a re-action exercised by organs not overpowered by excessive stimulus. The vivid representation of a pleasure as easily attainable would thus be the mark of a cerebral process which was tending strongly in the direction of realising that pleasure, by evoking associated cerebral processes supporting representations of the means to its attainment, and other circumstances connected with it. And the vivid representation of a pain would similarly be evidence of motor strength in the cerebral process which was supporting it, and which would be similarly tending to the avoidance of the pain, by evoking the associated images of the means and circumstances of its avoidance.

Briefly we may say, that attainment of pleasure and avoidance of pain are equally and alike natural desires, being dependent on the law of physical self-preservation, and that the vividness with which they are represented, that is, the keenness with which the desires are felt, though not itself a motive power, is direct evidence of the motive power of those neuro-cerebral processes upon which it

immediately depends at the time of feeling the desires. It is, then, only as embodied in desires, of which they are the source, that we can speak of pleasures and pains as evidence of motive power in volitional action, or as *motives* in the usual and legitimate sense, that is, can take the degrees of their felt intensities as evidence of different degrees of that motive power.

But in thus using pleasures and pains embodied in desires as evidences cf the motive power of the real agencies operative in acts of choice, it is evident that we are necessarily abstracting from their specific qualities, and considering them in respect of their intensity alone. Pleasure and pain, and the desires embodying them, are always found as features or characters involved in some specific feeling or idea, whether presented or represented. There is no such thing as a pleasure, a pain, or a desire, existing purely as pleasure, pain, or desire, independent of a specific feeling or idea to which it belongs, and to which it gives an additional characterisation. There may be, and are, many specific feelings, as Dr. Bain among others has clearly shown, which are indifferent in this respect, that is, are unaccompanied either by pain, pleasure, or desire. But there is no instance of pain, pleasure, or desire, apart from specific feeling; they are not, as it were, the unwrought material, or the wild stocks upon which specific feelings are engrafted; but rather the reverse of this would furnish the truer images. It is, then, the abstract property of intensity, in pleasures, pains, and the desires embodying them, which we employ as evidence, when we speak of them as evidences of the strength of motives.

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Similarly also the motive strength of the neuro-cerebral processes, which they are employed to indicate, is an abstract property of those processes. It is not the only feature in them. It is only the feature with which we are more immediately concerned, in analysing the acts of choice which they determine. When we come to the specific characters of pleasures, pains, and desires, that is, to the specific feelings in which they arise, and which, as it were, they tone or tinge, we enter upon quite different ground. We then quit the consideration of the mere strength or intensity of motives, and begin to compare the feelings or ideas, which from that abstract point of view alone we call motives, in respect of their specific qualities or kinds, relatively to one another, so as to estimate their relative value, or place in a scale of dignity or worth. This happens whenever we deliberate with a view to choosing between alternatives of action, and is essential to that deliberation. The sensitiveness to these specific qualities of feelings and ideas in their whole range, including the power of discriminating and estimating both their intrinsic and their relative worth and dignity, is what is commonly known by the name of the Moral Sense.

An estimate of the strength of motives, on the other hand, is no necessary or essential part of an act of choice. The act of choice itself is the test to which we bring the strength of motives in every particular case, and the test, being matter of simple fact, is for each particular case final and without appeal. The feeling for which we actually decide is thereby shown to be the strongest in motive power at the moment of decision. Compari-

son and deliberation between, alternative feelings or desires are the mode in which the test is applied. We may of course introduce into that process the consideration of the comparative strength, as motives, of the desires which we compare; but it is not essential to the deliberation, as part and parcel of an act of choice, that we should do so. The act of choice may be, and most often is, complete without it.

The drift of these remarks will perhaps be more clearly seen, if, recurring to the four heads under which the act analysed at the outset of this Section was distributed, we refer pleasure and pain to the first of those heads, namely, the contents of the alternatives represented, and the desires springing from them, which are motives of action, to the second, or detailed comparison of the alternatives. The reasons for choosing one desire in preference to another will then come under the third head, that is to say, under that continuation of the comparison. by which the relations of the alternative contents to other experiences, which are their consequences, are brought forward into distinct consciousness.

For at whatever point comparison of, and deliberation between, alternative desires enters into the volitional process, so as to lead up therein to a final act of decision,—in which deliberation an estimate of their intrinsic and relative worth and dignity, as embodying feelings or ideas of specifically different qualities, is necessarily included, —then those very same specific feelings and ideas, including their pleasures and pains, which in their character of desires we call motives, from

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their affording evidence of real motive forces, become reasons as well as motives for coming to a particular decision, the term *reason* meaning any idea or evidence which tends to decide judgment solely as a knowing, and which therefore stands to judgments as motives stand to acts of choice.[1] In deliberation the character of being reasons supervenes, as it were, upon that of being motives, the feelings and ideas, with their pleasures and pains, remaining as the basis of both characters. The same specific feeling, idea, pleasure, or pain, may thus be at once not only the Motive and the Reason, but also the End, of an act of volition or choice;—motive, in so far as it is the actually preponderating desire, or the desire actually adopted, reason in so far as it is the desire judged to be truly preferable, and end in so far as the deliberation terminates with its adoption, which makes it the initiation of further progress in the same direction. The motive or desire then becomes a deliberately chosen act, and the end of one act is the beginning of another in accordance with itself.

Continued comparison of desires brings our third category, that of the Reason of preferability in volitions, definitely into view. In comparing represented alternative actions, each of which has some desirability, with a view to select one of them, I review their nature, consequences, and relations, by calling up the ideas and feelings connected with them by association. I class them

[1] Since judgments are also acts, it follows that they are liable to be determined by motives which are not reasons. Where this is the case, it is, strictly speaking, not a judgment, but an *assent*, which is determined.

with their similars or analogues, and compare them with one another, in relation to the whole conscious life into which they are proposed for adoption. I consider the advantages and disadvantages, of various kinds, attaching to each of them, and the certainty or uncertainty with which they may be expected. Every alternative contemplated having some degree of motive power to begin with, I now modify their relations in this respect, by considering and combining with each fhe connected circumstances which increase or diminish its desirability. In other words, I weigh the reasons for and against each alternative action, decide on that which has on the whole a preponderance of reasons in its favour, and in so doing give the greatest motive force to the most apparently reasonable action. Thus, by means of acts of comparison, the preponderating reason increases the motive force of the representation which it favours, and makes it my preponderating motive in acting.

The question will rightly and necessarily be asked here,—How can reasons, which are merely marks and signs, *causæ cognoscendi*, of the preferability of actions, give preponderating force to motives which are real conditions of action, being energies of neuro-cerebral processes? At first sight we seem here to have come to a conclusion which shows that, after all, states or processes of consciousness exercise a real influence, have a real action, on the neuro-cerebral mechanism, and exercise it in the very heart and centre of the whole system of conduct, the act or turning-point of volitional decision and choice.

But the explanation is easy. The whole process of comparing alternative actions, in order to decide on one of them, is a process attended with self-consciousness. Comparison of one's own actions in representation is a self-conscious act. But self-consciousness is a process-content which depends upon neuro-cerebral processes, just as much as consciousness does. Reasons are particular states or processes, in this process-content as a whole, which depend upon particular movements in the neuro-cerebral processes which support it; and these particular movements it is, which at once give reasons their weight as motives, and connect and, as it were, incorporate them with the other processes of neuro-cerebral action. When reasons are said to supervene upon motives, and give one or more of them preponderating force over others, it is in reality the more complex and farther reaching neuro-cerebral processes, supporting self-consciousness, which control, direct, and modify, the simpler neuro-cerebral processes supporting those parts of consciousness which we know under the name of motives. It is in fact the neuro-cerebral processes supporting moments of self-consciousness which are meant, when we say that *we* give the greatest force to the most apparently reasonable action, or that *we* are the agents in acts of choice.

We thus in a manner introduce distinctions into the operation of the neuro-cerebral system, by which conscious and self-conscious action in its entirety is supported, that is, we imagine distinct modes of its operation, corresponding to and supporting those different experiences which we call Ends, Motives, and

Reasons, of action. These are in fact the categories, or general conceptions, under which Ethic brings the phenomena of immanent volition or choice, so far as they are objects of immediate experience, in order to understand and master them, having first found them capable of a rough analysis and distribution, such as that with which the present Section began. It will be observed that I speak of immanent acts of choice only. If overt voluntary actions, or lines of conduct directed to obtain ends not wholly within the individual's own power, had been in question, the categories employed would have been different. They would have included in addition a fourth conception, that of *Means*, and the sense given to the other three would have been materially altered.

Returning to our three categories of immanent volition, it must be noted, that they are by no means empirical distinctions, each attaching to one set of conscious states exclusively. The same feeling or idea may be both a motive and a reason, according as it is considered as evidence of motive power, that is, in point of its energy or intensity alone, or in point of its estimated character and place in the scale of preferability. Neither ends nor reasons are devoid of motive power. Some motive force attaches to them, as well as to what we call motives strictly, since all alike depend upon some part or other of the neuro-cerebral processes which support conscious and self-conscious action in its entirety.

It is the case of Motives, however, which compels us, in the present state of psychology, to distinguish clearly between the two separate meanings

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of the same word. This is necessary because the word *motive* of itself implies a really conditioning agency, and has also acquired a right, in Ethic, to be used as a term of consciousness. We necessarily speak of all conscious and self-conscious action in terms of consciousness, most of which have come down to us from times before the entire dependence of consciousness on neuro-cerebral processes was generally recognised; and we therefore require some term of consciousness to express the various degrees of force with which ideas and feelings appear to act upon one another and upon ourselves. The terms *End* and *Reason* of action are terms of consciousness, and also have parts or elements of the process-contents of consciousness as the objects immediately suggested and signified by them. But with the term *Motive* the case is different. Here we have to retain the term as a term of consciousness, while recognising that its main and immediately signified object, namely, motive power, is not a part of existent consciousness itself, but belongs to the neuro-cerebral processes which are its real condition. The intensity or vividness of an idea or of a feeling, by which it appears to operate upon consciousness, is not in itself a motive force at all.

Finally, in connection with the two meanings of the term *motives*, a point should be noticed which might be a stumbling block in interpreting the phenomena of practical experience. Motives as states of consciousness, or motives which we may express as reasons of choice, are not commensurate with the whole power of the really-conditioning processes on which they depend, and of which they

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are evidence. They are commensurate only with temporary phases of their activity. They do not reveal the full powers or capacities of those processes. There is always more behind, below the threshold of consciousness, of which they given no indication, but which may give rise to consciousness of a similar kind, at some time sooner or later, under conditions more or less altered. Motives are desires which have their roots in, and are the temporary manifestation of tendencies to act in certain definite ways, inherent in the neuro-cerebral system, and more or less closely bound up with, more or less deeply seated in, its natural or acquired constitution.

This circumstance is a source at once of the value and of the difficulty of self-examination in moral conduct. In order to judge rightly of the past, and prepare for rightly guiding the future, of our own action, we require to discriminate merely specious reasons, and merely apparent motives, from those which truly represent the motive forces which were, are, or will be, the really operative ones, and for this purpose to push the analysis of our own motives and reasons to the furthest point possible, by means of introspection. There are few moralists who do not recognise both the importance and the difficulty of self-examination, though, like every other necessary task, it is liable to abuse in the performance.

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§ 3. The subject having thus been laid open in its chief features and divisions, there now arises the really central and crucial question of Ethic, namely, the question of the Criterion of preferability in acts of choice, of which we have hitherto caught

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but partial and imperfect glimpses. In the self-conscious process of comparing the reasons for coming to any particular decision, and adopting any particular End, which, as the conclusion of one volitional act and the beginning of another, may institute or continue a connected line of conduct, is there any single kind of reason which necessarily, or in all cases without exception, determines—not the choice which we actually make between the alternative desires, but—the judgment which we pass on that choice, as good or bad, right or wrong? If there is, then that single kind of reason is the Criterion of which we are in search, and the judgments which are determined by that single kind of reason are the source and origin of the ideas of moral good and evil, in the strict and proper sense of those words.

It should be premised, that practical judgments, that is, judgments on alternative actions, as actions, are always judgments of those actions as good or bad, right or wrong, generally; in contrast to judgments on opposite conceptions concerning other matters of fact, which are judged by their accordance with, or conduciveness to, a particular kind of good, namely, truth of fact. For in these judgments of alternative actions as such, we always begin with the idea of the one action being better or worse than the other; since the mere fact of their being different, as well as alternative actions, involves this idea of preferability. If, however, we can discover no reason for judging either alternative better or worse than the other, still our judgment does not cease to be a judgment of preferability, but becomes a judgment of equality between the actions in point

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of preferability, that is, of their indifference (so far as we can see) in respect of being good or bad, right or wrong. That is to say, judgments of indifference are based upon reasons, including that single kind called the Criterion, just as much as judgments which assert a greater preferability in one action than in another.

The question of the Criterion is one of vital importance for our whole view of the moral nature of man, and his relation as a moral being to the universe of which he is a part, since it is no other than this, whether true preferability, or moral right and wrong, are or are not known to be realities. It is also a question of the utmost generality in the domain of voluntary action, which is also that of Ethic; a question which we cannot evade, if we would systematise our experience of practice, and also one which cannot be answered off-hand, from the stores of individual habit, prepossession, or temperament. In judging for instance (to keep to the case chosen for our preliminary analysis), that either decision, in favour either of the home or the foreign tour, was or would be the better of the two, or that one was right, the other wrong, or that both were equal in this respect, is there any single mark of good and bad, of right and wrong, to which we can point, in proof that our judgment of our own actual decision is itself right? If no such mark, the same in all cases of judging our own volitions, is discoverable, our acts of choice will necessarily escape all save purely prudential criticism. It is thus clear, that the present question brings us face to face with the problem—What is the ultimate foundation, if any, of the conception of there being

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a real moral difference between good and bad actions, or, as it is commonly and truly called, moral right and wrong?

The first point to be noted is, that the judgments of self-consciousness, of which we speak, are judgments, not of desires, but of volitions, or acts of choosing between desires. Alternative desires offered to choice give rise to alternative volitions, according as one or the other desire is adopted. I mean, that, up to the moment when we choose between any two desires A and B, the volition which should adopt A is a different volition from that which should adopt B, and yet only one of these volitions can become the actual one; the other, though possible up to the moment of choice, remains for ever unperformed. It is thought of, after the choice, as having once been possible. The actual volition, on the other hand, becomes actual, after deliberation, in and by the act of decision completing and closing the deliberation by the adoption of one desire and rejection of the other. It is these actual volitions which are the objects of the self-conscious judgments of which we speak. And since it is plain, that reasons of any and every kind can enter into the deliberations leading up to a final act of choice whereby a volition becomes actual, so as to have their weight as motives in actually determining it, the question before us is, whether there is any single kind of reason which alone is available to determine our self-conscious judgments passed on the moral value of actual volitions, notwithstanding that it can also enter with motive power into the deliberations by which the actual volitions are in point of fact determined. If there is, that

single kind of reason is the criterion of which we are in search.

The intricacy which chiefly makes analysis difficult here lies, I think, in the circumstance, that the particular mode of self-consciousness which has volitions as such for its objects, namely conscience, accompanies the whole process of volition, and appears in both its parts. It not only passes judgment on actual volitions when complete, or at the moment of completion, but also enters into the course of the deliberation leading up to them; so that it appears in two characters, now having for its content a reason contributing to determine the actual volition, now having for its content a final and authoritative judgment upon it; that is, appears, figuratively speaking, now as an advocate, now as a judge. We have, as it were, to pick it out, by means of the single kind of reason which is the *differentia* of its judgments, from other modes of self-consciousness, not having volitions as such for their objects, which also enter, with their judgments, into the deliberation preceding a final act of choice. But this circumstance in no way interferes with its unique competency to pass valid moral judgments on actual volitions, derived from the unique kind of reason which is the *differentia* of its judgments, or which it employs as its criterion in judging.

To aid us in the task proposed, three things may now, I think, be taken to stand out clearly, as the result of our analysis, so far as it has gone at present, (1) the desires, motives, and reasons, which enter into all deliberations preceding actual volitions, (2) the actual volitions which are the objects of judgments of self-consciousness, and

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(3) the judgments which self-consciousness passes on actual volitions, irrespective of whether these judgments have or have not a reason or reasons in common with some of those which have entered into the preceding deliberation. It is only with the two latter of these that we have directly to do at present, that is to say, with actual volitions as the objects judged, and with the judgments of self-consciousness passed upon them. The criterion, or single kind of reason, which differentiates conscience from other modes of self-consciousness, by enabling it to pass valid moral judgments on actual volitions, must be found, if at all, both in those self-conscious judgments, and in certain marks corresponding to it in the actual volitions which are the objects judged. For it must be such as to enable us to pass affirmative judgments with a positively known content, and all such judgments consist in the affirmation, in thought, of perceived relations in the objects judged, so that the judgment does no more than give back, in its own form of conception and thought, facts which have been positively perceived in the objects perceived and thought of.

To speak first of the judgments. All judgment has a nature of its own, simply as judgment. It is the completion of some step in the process initiated by selective attention with the purpose of knowing something more of a given content, than is known at the moment when the purposive attention is directed upon it. The purposive attention seeks to discover some positive relation in perceived objects; and an affirmative judgment asserts, that some such positive relation has been found. Otherwise only a

negative judgment could be passed, that is, an assertion that no such positive relation has been discerned, and no such desired addition to positive knowledge attained. We have seen that this is the nature of judgments in the very simplest case of them, namely, in the first formation of general concepts out of percepts; as when, for instance, having for the first time seen a red colour, I purposively attend to it, holding it open, as it were, to coalesce with further experience, but cannot complete the general conception of redness, until similar perceptions occur, which from their observed similarity, or coalescence in point of quality, I class with it under the same general head, so as to be able to refer, in thought, any subsequently occurring instance of a similar colour (whether in presentation or representation) to the same general class, and call it by the common name *red*.

The judgments of conscience can be no exception to this same nature, which is essential to judgments generally. In virtue of their springing from purposive acts of attention, they seek for further knowledge of their special object, volitions. They look for marks in them which shall correspond to this desire, and so enable the affirmation of positive relations into which they enter. At the same time they have the additional character of being practical judgments, in the sense of aiming at better practice as well as better knowledge, and to this purpose their aim at better knowledge is subordinate. It follows, that what they necessarily seek is to systematise our knowledge about volitions, by expressing in their own

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form of judgment the facts belonging to their nature as forward-looking and conscious acts of choice. Or in other words, the aim of the judgments of conscience, as practical judgments, is to guide present or future volitions, by means of positive knowledge of their nature as practical acts.

But for this purpose they bring with them no prior positive idea of any particular End, which they would guide volitions to attain. It is better practice only, without specifying *what*, which is their aim, just as it is better knowledge only, not any particular piece of knowledge, which is aimed at by speculative judgments. Their having a prior idea of any particular End is precluded by their nature, as founded simply and solely in experience.

They can derive no criterion, no standard, by which to judge volitions, from any such pre-conceived idea, for none exists. The criterion, or single kind of reason, by which they are determined, so far as it belongs to them as judgments only, is therefore nothing else than that desire of positive and systematic knowledge, which is common and essential to all acts of judgment, speculative and practical alike, though in their case subordinated to, or restricted by, the further purpose of guiding those volitions which they judge, to better issues than without them would be possible. And this is the *differentia* of their criterion from reasons of all other kinds, which may enter into the rational determination of volitions, as acts of choice between alternative desires. It is to know, for practical purposes, the truth about the preferability of volitions as practical acts.

So far, then, with respect to the Criterion as it belongs to acts of judgment. Now let us turn to the marks corresponding to it in the volitions judged. Volitions in their essential nature are the objects of the judgments, and this essential nature consists in their being acts of a conscious agent, or the conscious agent itself in action, and that agent the very one who also passes the self-conscious judgments upon them. They and the judgments upon them go on concurrently as acts of one and the same self-conscious individual being, who has or may have at his command all the experience which his memory can recall from the past, including his memory of past volitions and their consequences, and of the effect which they have had upon his own character and his own tendencies to act in particular ways.

If, then, any particular volitions are to be judged in their essential nature as acts of the conscious being, and without bringing in by assumption any particular pre-conceived End or Purpose as a standard, by their tendency to attain which they are to be judged good or bad acts, it follows, that their relation to the rest of the nature, character, and tendencies, of the conscious being who performs and judges them, furnishes the only facts about them which are submitted to that practical and self-conscious judgment. Only the facts belonging to and constituting that relation are facts of which that judgment takes account, in conceiving and characterising them, or facts which satisfy its desire of knowing the truth about them. All others are irrelevant to the judgment. And since the judgment is itself a practical one, that is, governed

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ultimately by the general purpose of better guidance of volitions in the future, the only facts of which it takes account, in the relation specified, are facts which show what effect the volitions judged will have upon the nature, character, and tendencies, of the agent, into which they are or are about to be incorporated.

Our conclusion, then, may be thus stated. As forward-looking acts, volitions can be judged only by their anticipated effects. And yet, since the effects at which they ought to aim are not known beforehand by any particular pre-conceived End or Purpose, but the volitions, in choosing between and adopting desires, are steps forwards into an as yet wholly undetermined future, which they themselves contribute to create, it follows, that the anticipated effects, by which they must be judged, can only be their effects upon the agent's character, to which they belong, and which moves forwards into the future along with them; that is, by their relation to his entire character, as it is about to become, partly in consequence of what they are and contribute to make it. Volitions, therefore, when judged practically, are judged by the anticipated harmony or discord which they tend to produce in the character of the agent. Or in other words, an anticipated harmony between the volitions to be judged and the future character of the agent is the Criterion of the judgments of Conscience, passed upon those volitions as good or bad actions; and in consequence of this criterion, and of the judgments which are based upon it, a permanent and ever developing harmony of character in the agent becomes the End, or is in thought

established as the End, at which all volitions ought to aim. In order of knowledge, the End is established in consequence of the Criterion, not the Criterion in consequence of the End. In actual conduct, it is always accordance with the Criterion which makes every action right that is right.[1]

This relation between End and Criterion in order of knowledge is of singular importance, because it opens an endless vista before the development and improvement of character, instead of a vista closed by the assumption of some imagined goal. There is not only no ideal Self which we are morally bound to realise, as some moralists seem to suppose, but there is no End whatever which has justifying power in conduct. What justifying power any End has, it derives from the Criterion, in which alone justifying power resides. That is, Ends are themselves justified, if at all, by their congruity with the Criterion of right conduct. And it is action, or actual choice, in conformity to the Criterion, which is commonly known as Duty. All forms of Eudæmonism are precluded by this consideration. Even in what is called Self-realisa-

[1] I think it must have been from losing sight of volitional actions as the sole immediate object-matter of Conscience, that I came to write, as I wrote in 1870: "The End makes everything right that is right, even the Criterion itself." (*Theory of Practice*, Book II. Chap. II. § 80. Paragraph 2).—It is only as a real condition that the End can be said to make the Criterion right; and even then, only in case we can conceive it both as the End of human action and as a reality existing from and to eternity. The question of the ascertainment of the End of human action, that is, in what it is known to consist, must be kept distinct from the further question, what relation (supposing it ascertained) it holds to the Eternal and Divine Power. It is with Ends, Motives, and Reasons, as positively known to us, and with their priorities *inter se* in order of knowledge (though not without reference to their proximate real conditions), that we are alone concerned, in laying the foundations of Ethic by analysis of experience. Now without a criterion of rightness in actions, a knowlege of the rightness of Ends is as impossible as a knowledge of the rightness of actions themselves.

tion, the ideal Self to be realised, unless the ideal is based upon duty, or action in conformity to the criterion, is not, morally speaking, worth realising. Why should ideal Selves especially be realised, more than any other kind of ideals?

There is but one case, but one sense of the term, in which self-realisation is tenable as the true End in conduct, and that is when we understand *self* to mean (as it has been shown above that it strictly does mean) *Conscience*, as a mode of self-consciousness. For then and then only is self-realisation identical with actual conformity to the Criterion, actual obedience to the law of Duty. Otherwise the term sets up an End, the justification of which has still to be sought, in place of the criterion which is the source of justification. Self-realisation then becomes one among the many forms of Eudæmonism, the common characteristic of which consists in their setting up some particular ideal of human imagination as the source of the Moral Law, instead of deriving their idea of that source from a patient analysis of human nature.

Finally, then, and without appeal to judgments of any other kind than its own, Conscience judges acts of volition by the criterion of an Anticipated Harmony in the Character of the agent. It approves them if it perceives that they tend to promote this harmony, condemns them if it perceives that they tend to dissolve it, or introduce discord into the character. It therefore necessarily groups them ultimately into two classes only, good and bad, notwithstanding their immense variety as distinguished by the desires which they adopt or reject. But as actions they are more than *good* or

bad, names common to them with desires, feelings, thoughts, and objects of all kinds. As actions morally judged they are judged to be *right* or *wrong*, which are terms strictly applicable to actions only, and in the full sense to volitional actions only. The terms themselves are metaphors taken from the contrast between a straight course and a crooked one.

Acts of choice in conformity to the criterion are themselves momentary realisations of that harmony which the criterion prescribes. They are actions which consciously continue, and thereby institute for the future, that of which they themselves are instances in the present. Volitions in which there is a conscious struggle between duty and inclination are actions of the highest kind, in point of complexity, of all kinds possible to organic beings like ourselves. The conscious acts or processes of thinking, feeling, and doing evidenced by sense of effort, are therein combined in the closest interaction, and may all be present in great intensity. When this occurs, the unity in complexity, that is, the harmony, of their combined action consists in the factors of doing and of feeling being brought into subordination to the factor of judging and self-conscious thought. The action of choice, or volition as a whole, then conforms to the criterion which as a whole it includes. That is to say, the action of the organic being in conformity to the criterion is then obedient to a law which it imposes on itself, a law springing from within its own nature. At the upper end of the scale of processes and actions, that is, in the higher life of conscious redintegration, such actions are the continuation of that

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process or action, common to all organic life, and a necessary element in it, which, from its universal presence in organic life, is called the *law* of self-preservation. In the higher life of redintegration, the moral character of the organism is that which the conduct prescribed by the criterion of conscience inevitably tends to preserve and promote.

For, whatever may be the basis or, as it were, the outfit of tendencies, which the organism possesses previously to volitions arising in it, or whatever those tendencies may have become in consequence of modification by volitions, the actually modifying agency, in the higher life of redintegration, is always volition. At any point of that higher life, volition, as the act of choosing between alternative desires, either entirely changes, or modifies, or confirms, the existing course of that life. "As the twig's bent, the tree's inclined"; and the moment of decision in volition is the moment of the twig's bending. Volitions re-act upon the desires between which they choose, and which are the momentary manifestations of tendencies; and in so doing they re-act also upon the tendencies from which desires spring; and the whole man is, to that extent, modified, and his whole mode of re-action upon the world around him to that extent made different from what it would have been without the volitions. It is volitions, then, which are to be acted on, if we would mould character. They are the points at which our own character is accessible to us; they are the acts by guiding which we may bring our character into greater harmony with itself, as well as into relations of greater harmony with the world about us.

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At these key points it is, that Conscience applies its lever. The fact that we are self-conscious of volitions is the cardinal fact in the whole range of practice and of practical science. For conscience in judging volitions exercises a real action upon them; since it is itself, like them, an action supported by real cerebral energies. It is a real factor in the decisions at which they arrive, both when it enters into the deliberation preceding a decision, and when, in passing judgment upon one decision, it modifies the conditions under which subsequent decisions will be arrived at. Judgments of conscience are at once the highest and last points reached in the development of the conscious agent, in the order of his real genesis and history, and the highest and first points in the order of that knowledge which is both a knowledge of his real nature and an anticipation of his future development. For they alone have, in the criterion, an ultimate standard, universally applicable, than which none can be conceived higher, and in the light of which alone a true moral estimate of nature or character can be formed. And, as we have just seen, they also tend, in their character of actions, to initiate or determine that volitional choice, which in their character of judgments they approve.

Now we can distinguish and name volitions only by their content, that is, by the desires which they adopt compared with the desires which they reject; and desires we can compare by means of that power of discriminating the qualities of the satisfactions desired, to which the name *moral sense* has properly been given. But we do not judge volitions by the satisfactions aimed at by the

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desires which they adopt. We judge them as volitions, not as desires. Volitions judge desires, first in deliberating upon them, and then in adopting or rejecting them. In conscience we judge the volitions themselves. The harmony or discord which they introduce into the life and character of the conscious being who is the agent in them, not the quality of the desires which they adopt, is the criterion or standard by which in conscience we judge them; and judgments of this kind are the truest knowledge possible to us of their real nature, since it is a knowledge of them in their essential character of actions. In judging them, the eye of conscience is fixed upon the whole series of acts, of which they are members, and upon the character which they tend to form, not upon the satisfactions which they tend to secure. Volitions are right, if they tend to make or keep the agent's character at unity with itself, wrong if they tend in the opposite direction. And desires are good or bad, not on account of the satisfactions which are their objects, but according as the volitions adopting or rejecting them are right or wrong. Thus the moral nature of desires depends upon that of volitions, and that of volitions upon the harmony or discord which they tend to produce in the character of the agent.

So far we have been considering what is the primary and fundamental case of the nature and operation of the judgments of conscience; I mean where they both enter into the deliberations leading up to acts of decision, and also judge the volitions which become actual in those completing acts. There is, however, another case, and that is where conscience looks back upon and

judges past volitions, recalled by memory. To this case I must now briefly advert; and but very few words will be needed, since this retrospective action is never a simple judging by results, as it is called, but always takes place by our putting ourselves back, in memory or imagination, into the position which we occupied at the moment of the volition judged. We judge our past actions morally by recalling the state of our feeling and of our knowledge, at the time when we adopted them by an immanent act of choice. This shows how far and in what sense we can condemn ourselves for actions which we thought right, or at any rate not clearly wrong, when doing them, and thus raise further questions for self-examination as to our past conduct. In condemning a past action not thought wrong at the time, in the light of further knowledge of our own character gained since doing it, all we can say is,—If I had known then what I know now, that action would have been clearly wrong. And the further question then arises,—Had I not the power to have known this then, supposing I had been actuated by a genuine desire to judge or do rightly? The whole question of the degree to which self-deceit and self-flattery are possible is thus opened.

The necessity for putting ourselves back in imagination, when judging the rightness or wrongness of a past action, into the state of mind in which we were when we performed it, arises from the fact, that the moral character of the past act, as right or wrong, is the thing to be judged; that is to say, it must be taken in its character of a forward-looking action, an act in process of being

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acted. What we now judge, assuming the validity of the criterion, is, whether our past act was a sincere application of it, not whether the anticipated harmony, in which the criterion consists, has or has not been realised. The result in this respect of the act of choice, now judged in retrospect, cannot serve as a test of its rightness or wrongness, even to the agent himself; still less to other persons. What it serves to test is, either the correctness of the agent's self-knowledge, supposing him to have chosen in conformity to the criterion, or the strength of the motive power supporting his conscience at the time, compared to the strength of opposing motives. If these are relatively strong, the full or any permanent realisation of an anticipated harmony may be long delayed.

But this does not show whether or no the agent chose sincerely under the guidance of the criterion, nor can it be used to disprove the claim of an anticipated harmony to be the criterion of choice as right or wrong. This is evident when we consider, that the motive power supporting the criterion is not the only agency operative in volition, but that it acts in combination with other motives, of which the actual volition is the resultant energy. Thus even the near results of a choice in conformity to the criterion are partly due to conditions other than the criterion itself, and its remoter results to the intervention of additional conditions, which may not be due to volition at all, and which we may have no means of foreseeing. The so-called defeat of a volition which conforms to the criterion, that is, its failure to establish a harmony of character in the near future, (for the

volition itself, if actual, can never be defeated), is therefore no proof that the criterion is not the test and source of right action. It shows only the comparative weakness of the motive power which was supporting it at the moment of volition. The nature of the criterion, and of action so far as it is determined by it, is entirely unaffected by defeat. And it is on the nature of the criterion, not on its strength as a motive from time to time, that its claim to obedience depends. It has a divine and unconditioned *right* to rule.

In applying the criterion, then, whether to judge actions in the doing, or actions already past by retrospect, we are always judging them by something which is inseparable alike from their essence and from their aim, as actions of rational and self-conscious agents. All thinking is harmonising, connecting and relating this idea with that, under the Postulates of Logic. Now just as all thinking governed by the desire of knowing more than at present about any given object-matter is an attempt to harmonise the given facts of that object-matter with themselves, and with others that may be given, —conformity with given facts of perception being the criterion or test of truth in the thought about the facts, whereby thought is raised into knowledge, and not any particular pre-conceived conformity or harmony of ideas or thoughts among themselves,—so all thinking about conscious action, or action consciously directed to change and modify the facts included in its object-matter *in futuro*, that is to say, all thinking about present desires, which are the springs of action, governed by the desire of knowing which of them will produce

Book III. Ch. VI. § 3. Criterion of Preferability. —Conscience.

the best modification, is a judging which of them will best harmonise with, or tend to produce harmony among, the other desires or tendencies of the Subject's own nature or character; and the thought of such a harmony is a thought by which our judgment is always more or less explicitly, but necessarily to some extent guided, though it is not the thought of any particular ideal state, in which we may imagine the harmony to be realised. Such a particular ideal state of harmony would correspond only to an hypothesis, in thinking governed by the desire of knowledge. At the same time, there is this great difference between the two cases of speculative and practical thinking, namely, that the power of verifying truth, which in speculative thinking is supplied by subsequently perceived facts, makes default in practical thinking, and leaves us with no other criterion but that which is supplied by the nature of thought itself, as a harmonising process, together with the already known nature of the objects judged, that is, of volitions.

On the whole, the practical effect of the critical action of self-consciousness upon volitions, at the moment of volition or choice, lies in its tending to bring them into harmony with its own judgments; these judgments being themselves founded on anticipations of harmony between the volitions and the future character of the agent, considered both in himself, and as an active member of the world around him. It is thus an anticipation of harmony between the volitions judged and the character of the agent, which must be held to be the criterion, or general ruling principle, of the judgments of

Conscience, at whatever epoch in the life of an individual, or in the history of the race, they may be passed.

But it must be noted, that what we can now define as an anticipated harmony inherent in the action of Conscience is not necessarily present explicitly, either in that form, or in the form of a conception at all, at the moment when Conscience judges. It is not a standard conception or idea, which, like an unit of measure, conscience brings with it ready made, with which to compare alternative acts of choice. This is only the ethical theorist's description of the action of Conscience in comparing alternatives with each other. Conscience previous to Ethic judges in a way which, in Ethic, analysis compels us to call judging by anticipating and requiring a harmony in the choice which it approves. But it is not implied that Conscience recognises this nature in its own judgments, though it is a nature which, as we perceive subsequently, that is, in framing a theory of practice, brings it into line with the other great departments of thought. Conscience approves and disapproves acts of choice, judging one really better and another really worse (and not merely apparently or for the feeling of the moment), long before any formulation of the mode or ground of its judgments can have been framed. Just in the same way, logical thought works, and has always worked, by the principles which we formulate as the Postulates of Logic, long before that formulation was possible, and quite independently of their being so formulated. In what may be called pre-ethical judgments of conscience, the Subject asks himself, without

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reference to theory, with regard to any action upon which he may be deliberating, Can I do this action, or can I do any other but this, without being inconsistent with what I know to be at once the most abiding and the most valuable constituent of my nature, as a self-conscious being?

Now in this ordinary common-sense idea of consistency we have implicitly that which, when we examine it analytically, becomes the criterion of an anticipated harmony. Both contain the formal element of congruity between present and future experience, and both are confined to criticising action, without including a desire for happiness or welfare in any shape, or for realising any special mode of consistency or harmony; though it is true, that happiness or welfare is or will be incidentally realised, as the accompaniment of that form of consistency which, sooner or later, results from obedience to honest self-criticism. The happiness or welfare of the Subject is no more a necessary ingredient in his criterion of right, than is the preservation of his own life. And this plainly is no part of his criterion, though, or rather because, it is the indispensable real condition of his acting and continuing to act in conformity to it. It is pre-supposed in pre-supposing any course of action, as the object-matter of criticism.

The function of conscience, therefore, is simply to judge whether the adoption of a given desire will or will not be in harmony with the rest of the Subject's own desires and tendencies in their entirety, when these are taken as a part of the known Course of Nature, supposing it to be continued into the future, and his own life continued with it.

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There is no doubt a sense in which this enquiry on the part of Conscience is instituted, not only by, but also in the interest of, the individual Subject; since it is the action about to be incorporated in the Subject, that is, the Subject's own action, which it is directed to judge. Nevertheless it is totally different from an enquiry into what is called expediency or the expedient, whether for the Subject himself or for other persons. For judgments of expediency to exist, it is requisite that some particular End should first have been selected as the Master-End of the individual; whereupon the means of its attainment become the object-matter of judgments of expediency, according as they seem conducive to it or the reverse. Now it has been shown, that there is a master-end set up by the criterion, namely, the production of a self-consistent character in the agent. This end it is, which takes the place of happiness or welfare, both in moral practice and in ethical theory, when the facts are subjected to a strict analysis.

Another thing must also be recognised concerning the criterion, a fact which may at first sight seem to be an impeachment, but turns out on examination to be a confirmation of its validity. I mean, that the mere fact of harmony, the mere circumstance or feature of one thing harmonising with another, is a gratification to human perception and intelligence; a gratification which, as such, is of a qualitative, not quantitative, nature; although this fact is of the utmost degree of generality, both in real and in possible experience. And this fact of harmony, with its gratification, is inherent in the judgments of Conscience taken alone as perceptive

acts of self-consciousness, just as it is in the judgments of purely logical thought; and also we may add, just as it is in the judgments of poetic and æsthetic imagination. It would be strange indeed, seeing the abiding and decisive part which harmony plays, both in trains of speculative and in trains of poetically and æsthetically imaginative thinking, if it were found to play no corresponding part in the guidance of practice generally. Just as it is not pretended, that the gratification inseparable from the perception of harmony is the circumstance upon which the character of harmony, as the criterion of right action, depends, so neither can it be maintained, that its inseparable presence disqualifies harmony from laying claim to that character and function.

The great point for all true Ethic is to make manifest the real *differentia*, if any, of the common-sense perception of right, or of moral good, from the common-sense experience of what is simply *de facto*, or simply expedient. But the existence of a real *differentia* it can only establish, by first showing analytically *what* it is, or in *what* it consists. It must therefore point out the presence of that *differentia* in the nature of actions, or in that of the feelings or ideas by which actions are defined. For it is only then that the *differentia* can be perceived as a permanent one, or as a real difference between the idea of right and that of any other desirability. In other words, unless this can be done, moral right and wrong are mere synonyms for pleasure and pain, desire and aversion; these having (strictly speaking) no moral character of their own, and being therefore non-moral, however highly deve-

loped, refined, or complex, the system of purposes founded on them may become. For in the whole course of evolution of such an undifferentiated system, there would be no point at which it would acquire a moral as opposed to a non-moral character.

That obedience to the judgments of Conscience is attended by a gratification of its own is a well-known fact, but this gratification is not the circumstance which makes it morally right. It is also our highest interest to give that feeling of gratification strength as a motive, in order actually and habitually to obey the judgments of Conscience; but to enjoy that feeling in its strength is not the End of strengthening it. And lastly, though it may be true, that habitual obedience to the judgments of Conscience will lead ultimately to Happiness or Welfare of the highest kinds, and of indefinitely increasing intensity of feeling, yet this is a truth which remains, and must remain for finite beings, a truth of anticipation, a fact not of positive knowledge but of Faith.

I will conclude with a few words in elucidation of the ultimate and universal nature of that principle of Harmony or Congruity, which I have called the Criterion. The perception of it as a fact of self-consciousness is the only perception, concerning the validity of which, as a source of satisfaction to the reason, no question can possibly be put. It is involved, as an element, in the fact of putting a question. It therefore cannot but be perceived as a rational satisfaction, if perceived at

all. It is therefore the source of the conception of valid law, or moral value, in conscious actions. It is possible to question the satisfactoriness, to the reason, of Pleasure or Enjoyment, or any kind of Happiness, or even of Self-realisation, in particular circumstances; to ask why they are satisfactory, and whether they would always be ends worth pursuing; thus implying that they rest on a reason beyond themselves, and that, though self-evident, they are not also self-explanatory. But this is not the case with Harmony, which is at once both an intellectual and an emotional satisfaction; thus containing two inseparable characteristics, one of which (the intellectual) is perceived as the *reason* of the other (the emotional), prior to any question being asked about the whole.

My meaning will be made clear by coming to more concrete and familiar experiences. There are two emotions, virtues, or traits of character, (for all these names are applicable to them), which seem to owe their moral value or validity immediately to the fact of their containing, or being concrete instances of, this feature of Harmony, at the same time that their moral value is universally admitted. I speak of Justice and Love, an analysis of which was given in my *Theory of Practice*,[2] where a claim was put forward on their behalf to be considered as together constituting the Moral Sense; and the Moral Sense so constituted was represented, not indeed as standing in the place of conscience, but as the stock from which, psychologically speaking, it issued, and

[2] Book I., Chapter II., §§ 25 and 31.

from which the moral validity of its judgments was derived.[3]

It will be seen that the reverse of this relation is what I now hold to be the truth, though the relation itself is extremely close, and indeed practically indissoluble. By a Moral Sense is meant primarily a sensibility to emotional qualities, or qualities of the emotional content of representations, a sensibility both perceptive of all, and discriminative of one from another, just as in the case of sensibility to sensations proper. The whole range of emotional feeling, the whole emotional content of the imagery or ideas brought before us by redintegration, is its object. The good and the bad, the pleasurable and the painful, the admirable and the abominable, the loveable and the detestable, as well as the specific qualities which (when once we have learnt to classify) we bring under those denominations, are its experiences. In nothing do men differ from one another more, than in the acuteness, delicacy, and range, of this sensibility. So much so indeed, that a high degree of these properties has come very frequently to be identified with the moral sensibility itself, and the term *moral sense* to be very frequently used as a term of praise only, meaning a sensibility which is awake to, and takes delight in, all kinds and degrees of what is good, loveable, or admirable. The perception of τὸ καλόν, to use the expressive though comprehensive Greek term, in all its forms, as a sensibility not only to æsthetic beauty, but to moral beauty also, as in generosity,

[3] Work cited. Book I., Chap. II., § 38, and Book II., Chap. II., § 80.

chivalry, honour, is that which in this way the term Moral Sense has come to express.

But neither in the large nor in the restricted meaning of the term *moral sense*, can it be the source, or furnish a foundation, for the perception of moral right and wrong, or afford a valid justification for the pleasure we take in the feelings which it discriminates as good, loveable, or admirable. It is precluded by its character as a Sense or a Sensibility. It furnishes the material element differentiating the actions upon which moral judgments are passed, but not the criterion which we use in passing them. None of the feelings or differences of feeling which it contains are of themselves, or simply as feelings, morally right or wrong. They become so only when, having first taken the form of *desires*, they are adopted by volitions. It is conscious volitional action alone, adopting or rejecting desires, that strictly speaking is morally right or morally wrong. Moral Sense or Sensibility alone affords no criterion for passing judgments on the moral rightness or wrongness of volitions.

Returning, then, to the two emotions, or virtues, which gave rise to this discussion of the Moral Sense, we see that Justice is valid directly and simply as a case of Harmony; its domain extending over all relations between persons, and enabling the adjustment of all such relations to the satisfaction of all the persons who may be directly or indirectly concerned in them. No one can or does question its final rightness or validity. Every one's effort is on the contrary to show, that his own claim is just. The reason of this was fully set forth by the

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analysis I have referred to. Love on the other hand, by which is not meant Eros, but every mode of feeling akin to the Charity of the New Testament, is valid, as was also set forth by the analysis referred to, as the security and guarantee of justice, the question why it is valid being here capable of being put because taken by itself it is emotional only. Both are felt to be *right* as states or contents of consciousness, because they are *right* as adopted and chosen desires;—and that simply in virtue of the Harmony which as states of consciousness they include, and which as adopted desires they promote, tending as they do to bring all other desires into harmony with themselves and with each other. In the analysis referred to, I saw clearly that Harmony was the ultimate source of all moral rightness; what I failed to see was, that moral rightness is not perceived in process-contents of consciousness, unless by derivation from volitions, volitions alone being that of which moral right and wrong are originally predicable.

Finally it must be noted, that not only is Harmony perceived as satisfactory to the reason, if perceived at all, but that it can never fail to be perceived, where it exists, in judging our own desires and volitions. It is a fact, an element of nature, attaching to certain inevitable and universally met with states of consciousness, as for instance in Justice; and, as such a simple and immediately perceived fact, requires a place to be found for it in any systematic theory of practice or conduct; refuses to be disregarded; and for ever forbids the adoption of any ethical theory, in which the conception of validity or moral right, in contrast

to moral wrong, is either thrust aside, or regarded as identical with that of happiness or satisfaction simply. It is the "still small voice" of conscience and of truth, opposed at once to the bravado of self-will in the domain of practice, and in that of theory to the illusions of empiricism.

§ 4. The Imperative of Conscience. —Duties.

§ 4. Conscience according to the foregoing analysis must be taken to have a twofold function; first, it perceives the moral rightness or wrongness of acts proposed for choice, and secondly, it perceives whether those it judges right, or those it judges wrong, are actually adopted. The latter function belongs to it as perception simply, though in this case it is the self-conscious perception of a real agent or Subject, and the facts perceived are the Subject's real actions, contributing to build up his moral character. The former function is the function of judging, with which we have just now been more particularly occupied. When we combine the second with it, and consider both as exercised together by a real Subject, we come back to what we may call Conscience in the concrete, and can consider its growth and development through different successive stages, both of individual and of human history.

But first, what is meant by its Imperative? Conscience is a capacity of perceiving and judging, not *prima facie* of commanding anything. It is only empiricists who expect, or pretend to expect, to find in conscience a faculty issuing orders to do or abstain from doing particular acts, as if it were a voice using a vocabulary of already known significance, and who consequently reject it as a reality, and regard it as a fiction, when no such empirical

orders can be discovered. Now in the first place, conscience is not a command to act simply. We cannot avoid acting; it is a necessity involved in our nature as conscious volitional agents. It is in guiding choice, by judging volitions, that conscience operates. This being so, a judgment of conscience, that any particular choice is right, becomes *eo ipso* a command to make that choice, and act in that particular way,—the alternatives being given by redintegration, not imagined by conscience, and action by way of choice being a necessity. Conscience is imperative in no other sense than that in which desires, motives, reasons, or judgments, are imperative, which involve a perception of preferability.

The characteristic difference, distinguishing the imperative of conscience from other imperatives, lies in the nature which is peculiar to the judgments of conscience, and which gives their imperative a peculiar kind of efficacy. And this peculiar efficacy we shall be able to trace, if I mistake not, to two characteristics of the judgments of conscience, one psychological, belonging to them as conditionates of deeply seated tendencies in the neuro-cerebral system, the other metaphysical, belonging to them as modes of knowing which have an infinite future as the object of their anticipation, and also are attended with peculiar emotional feelings, the existence of which is not explicable in any other way than by referring them to conscience as their source. Remorse and Peace of Mind, in all their varieties, which may properly be called the *Sanctions* of the imperative of conscience, are the feelings intended; while the fact, that an endless

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futurity is laid open, throughout which the consequences of human action may possibly extend, invests these sanctions with an additional weight of meaning, which seems to gain in impressiveness the more it is reflected on. It will be seen in the sequel, how and where, in the development of conscience, these sanctions of its imperative make their appearance.—The psychological efficacy just spoken of consists, broadly speaking, in the fact, which, when once perceived, is also perceived as a sanction of the imperative of conscience, that disobedience of itself is deadly. Every act of disobedience, or even of evasion, is to some extent a disintegration of the cerebral system of the Subject, destroying the *consensus* of its energies, a disintegration originating in its own action.

When from time to time we look back upon our own course of conduct through our past life, we see it as a succession of volitions or acts of choice, before each of which alternative actions have been proposed for acceptance, and by each of which one of those alternatives has been adopted. The actual consequences and inseparable incidents of every actual adoption are, or may be, seen as incorporated with our actual course of life, and with our powers, habits, and character, as real beings; and therefore also each actual adoption seen as contributing to determine the conditions under which every succeeding choice between alternative actions has been and will be proposed to us. In contrast with these actual consequences and incidents are seen those which we imagine would have resulted, both in ourselves and in extraneous circumstances, if an opposite alterna-

tive had been adopted. In addition to both of these, we see also the harmony, or the discord, between every adopted alternative and the judgment of Conscience, which approved or disapproved it at the time of its adoption. This approval or disapproval of actions by Conscience we express by calling the actions right or wrong; and these characteristics of actions have been shown to be something quite different from their conduciveness or non-conduciveness to any simply desired end, such as our own Happiness or Welfare, or those of others, or even the satisfaction of building up our own Character into conformity with a pre-conceived and admired Ideal. The appropriateness of the terms *right* and *wrong* to describe the alternatives adopted or rejected in conduct seems principally due to the fact, that we image by a line the course which the succession of the salient volitional acts of our life has taken. That course takes its place in the general panorama of our objective thought, as a line traced by the conscious Subject in moving through the world of experience on either side of him, in which seem to lie the consequences of those alternatives, once possible, the adoption of any of which would have been a deflection of the course actually taken. The line which images this course is not necessarily a straight one, nor are the deflections from it, which were once possible, necessarily wrong or crooked ones. On the contrary, an imagined straight line is made our standard or rule, with which we seem to compare, and by which we seem to judge, the line taken by our actual course of life, and thus pronounce it, and every part or action in it, straight or crooked, right or wrong.

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The ethical question here is, On what principle do we draw in imagination the straight line, conformity to which we call *right*, and deviation from which we call *wrong?* The result of the analysis of acts of choice in the foregoing Section tends plainly to show, that we form our idea of the standard straight line, adherence to which is *right* and deviation from which is *wrong*, by reference to that criterion of an anticipated harmony, by which conscience judges volitional acts. On this principle, the actions which Conscience approves or commands we consider *right*, and the imaginary line which they would trace, if invariably performed, we call straight; those which it disapproves or forbids we consider *wrong*, and the deviations which they initiate or trace, from the straight line so determined, we call crooked or twisted, literally "wrung."

But this is not the view taken by all, or even by the majority of ethical writers, in this country at least, with regard to the nature of actions as right and wrong, or with regard to the principle on which the imaginary standard straight line of right conduct is traced. All Eudæmonists, Prudentialists, Utilitarians, and Hedonists, both Altruistic and Egoistic, hold that the Ends aimed at by volitions determine the rightness or wrongness of the volitions, and therefore also of the course of life, as a whole, which volitions, together with their consequences and incidents, compose; and they accordingly construct the imaginary standard line of *right* by reference to the ultimate End adopted by the agent. It is as if they drew an imaginary straight line, joining the ultimate End of action, imagined in the

future, with the Subject's present position in the panorama of experience, and made that line their standard. Acts of choice which tend to the attainment of that End they consider conformable to the standard line of right conduct; those which lead in other directions they consider as deflections from it, that is, as crooked or wrong. The distinction between End and Means is thus their cardinal distinction in judging of right and wrong.

By adopting this principle of judging conduct they involve themselves theoretically in a formidable dilemma. The End or Ends to which they point as the ultimate determinants of right conduct must either be known to be the true Ends *a priori*, or by intuition, as it is called, a kind of knowledge of which Omniscience alone could be capable; or else they must be selected without reference to a previous standard, by the Self-will of the conscious agent, or his ideas of what true happiness would consist in. Either intuition (which assumes omniscience), or individual self-will, founded on an imagination of the most desirable end, must be relied upon to furnish the criterion, through furnishing the end, of right action. But by neither of these can a criterion be furnished; and therefore neither of them can be counted among the principles or facts, which constitute the Foundations upon which Ethical theory can be built. All forms of Intuitionism on the one hand, and of Eudæmonism and its congeners on the other, are therefore excluded from claiming validity as ethical theories. For their constitutive principle as theories compels them to base that claim either on the possession of intuitive truth, or on the imaginations of self-will;

of which the one is an impossibility for human agents, the other a proceeding in human nature which, taken alone, is the contradictory of Moral Law, in the wide sense of a law applicable to govern or guide volitions.

The first and most rudimentary question in Ethic is, not whether man naturally desires Happiness or Welfare, nor yet whether of two or more gratifications he naturally desires the greatest, (both questions being plainly answerable in the affirmative), but whether the adoption of either of those desires as ultimate Ends is the way which leads to the attainment or realisation of them. It may well be, that to aim at happiness is the surest way to miss its attainment; either because our idea of what happiness consists in is erroneous, or because our knowledge of the means to secure it is imperfect, or because the habit of seeking it renders us peculiarly sensitive to misfortune, or peculiarly liable to discontent and envy at the sight of the superior good fortune of others. And when we have once seen, that the adoption as an End, either of happiness generally, or of the greatest apparent happiness out of several, may be no step in the process of attaining the desired Ends, a second question is thereby immediately suggested, namely, Whether happiness or welfare generally, or the greatest imaginable happiness in particular, though they are natural objects of desire, should not be entirely abstracted from and disregarded, and the guide of conduct looked for somewhere else than in Ends of any kind, seeing that Ends are always adopted Desires of some kind or other? Supposing this latter course to be taken, then volition, which

is the process of adopting desires, would still be looked upon as the natural and necessary mechanism of conduct, which undoubtedly it is; but at the same time the principle regulating the mechanism and guiding the conduct would no longer lie in the End of volitions, as their *terminus ad quem*, but in some criticism and control of the desires which are the motives of volitions, as their *terminus a quo*.

The criticism and control exercised by Conscience over volitions at the moment of choice, as set forth in the foregoing Section, is a regulating principle of this kind. It is the very antithesis of Self-will, inasmuch as it consists in a conscious and voluntary submission to Law, as it will be manifested in the course about to be taken by Nature, and by the powers and desires of the conscious agent himself, other than those which are the immediate object of criticism. Self-will on the other hand could find no exponent more direct or more precise than the adoption of a desired End as the rule governing conduct, for no other reason than that of its greater desirability than other Ends. For the Subject, who is the agent of choice, thereby surrenders his powers of self-criticism, and makes his dominant desires, whatever they may be, and even if they are realisable only in the future, by means of present sacrifices, the self-legitimated dictators of his action. Self-will means volition governed by desire setting up for itself, against the criticism of self-knowledge. It is volition in alliance with inclination instead of in alliance with reason. It is therefore not the same as, but antagonistic to, the will or volition of the whole conscious being. Only that voli-

tion is volition of the whole conscious being, in which reason dictates to desire, not desire to reason. The selection of an ultimate End is a volition, and it is this volition which must be guided by reason, and not by desire, if the whole conscious being is to be in unison. Desires attract or impel as motives, but they do not guide as reasons of conduct. An inability to distinguish motives from reasons seems to lie at the root of all Eudæmonistic theories.

Another consideration also is of importance here. A science which deals with actions on the assumption of their being governed by Ends can never be an ultimate and a practical science, both at once. If it deals with the ultimate Ends of conduct, in their governance of action, as already adopted and fixed, in consequence of their appearing to satisfy the strongest, or most universal and comprehensive desires, then its whole business is to discover the means, or subordinate Ends, which are best fitted to secure and realise those ultimate Ends. But in this way it becomes a merely prudential science, or science of expediency, which, though practical in the sense of guiding conduct, is not ultimate. The task of comparing and criticising ultimate Ends, which it renounces, must then be taken up by some other science, the purpose of which would be to ascertain what sort of ultimate Ends was, abstractedly considered, the best; and such a science would necessarily be one of purely abstract speculation or Ideology. If on the other hand it deals with the actual formation and adoption of the ultimate Ends which govern conduct, whether in connection with such an Ideology or not, then it becomes a simply positive science, enquiring into the laws of the *de*

facto history and development of individuals and of the race, as they have actually taken place in the general order of existence, and is a practical science no longer. And in neither case, that is, neither as a prudential nor as a positive science, can it make any claim to rank as a necessary part or branch of Philosophy, or to take its place therein by the side of Logic, as a practical science founded upon a science of practice.

The true science of Ethic, which is at once philosophical, practical, and ultimate, must be founded on the phenomena of conscious action as seen and judged by self-consciousness; which is saying in other words, if the foregoing analysis is in principle correct, that it must be based upon analysis of the judgments of Conscience, and have for its practical purpose at once to systematise those judgments, and to apply them to enlighten and guide men's actual conduct, as Logic, in its practical department, enlightens and guides their reasoning powers. It is of course only the Foundations of this science that are our present subject. Yet these foundations cannot be sufficiently laid, unless we proceed to show, in general outline, how the judgments of Conscience act upon volitions in the concrete, and what the general characteristics are, which mark their intervention in the course of life.

The most general and at the same time most essential feature involved in the approval and disapproval of volitions by Conscience, according to the foregoing analysis, is its claim, immediately felt, to unconditional obedience on the part of the conscious agent; I mean, obedience unconditioned by

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consideration of the pleasure or pain which will result to himself from conforming to its dictates. The End, or desire to be adopted, is to be determined by the judgment of Conscience, not the judgment of Conscience by any desired End. And the circumstance, that the obedience required by conscience is unconditional, gives its dictates the character of Commands, a character called by Kant its "Categorical Imperative," the immanent volitions and overt or transeunt actions commanded by which are moral Duties. Kant, it is well known, goes so far as to say, that those Duties which are imperatively commanded by Conscience are never impossible, "*Du kannst weil Du sollst*"; a saying which is supported by the fact, that what is thus commanded is always an immanent act of choice, including the will to execute it by a transeunt act, though not including its actual execution, unless the transeunt act executing it is also in our own power.

Still the saying cannot be accepted without a word or two of explanation, and possibly of restriction. It is true, that Conscience commands the execution of volitions only so far as it depends upon the volition of the agent, and that, in the volitions themselves, the immanent act of choice is alone commanded immediately. But it does not necessarily follow that, because an immanent act of choice is directly and immediately commanded, it is within the power of the agent to determine his choice actually as, by the judgment of Conscience, he knows he ought to determine it. Conscience, it is true, being a judgment, in one sense involves volition, or is itself a voluntary act, but the volition so involved is the volition to judge,

not the volition to obey a judgment. The self-conscious judgment of what is right is one thing, the volition to obey it is another, and this volition may not always be possible, that is, in our own power. For when it is said, as it has been said above, that both or all of the alternatives offered to choice are possible, the meaning is, that there is no other obstacle to resolving upon any one of them, than what lies in the immanent action of choosing or resolving itself. *Nihil voluntati obnoxium, nisi ipsa voluntas.* Obstacles lying in the immanent action of choice or resolve are known by the familiar phrase, weakness of will. Judging and choosing may both alike be functions of the same neuro-cerebral redintegrative mechanism, taken as a single but complex organ; but it does not follow that, in the working of this mechanism, the two functions are weak and strong together, or that their changes in point of weakness and strength are inseparable from each other. And the choosing or resolving power may be so weakened by habit, or so powerfully affected by the gratification offered by one alternative, or by the aversion or dread inspired by another, that its power to obey the command of Conscience by an immanent act of choice may be practically annihilated.

What remains in all such cases, so long as the voice of Conscience is listened to at all, is this;—a power in the volition to adopt a desire to strengthen its own ability of making the choice which Conscience commands, and for that purpose to keep the command of Conscience steadily in view, and refrain from representing the desire or the aversion,

which are the motives of choosing an opposite alternative. Thus a secondary choice will be made, as a means towards making, at some future but not distant time, the choice originally commanded by Conscience; and the power of making this originally commanded choice, in case it should continue possible or be presented again, will become the ulterior End of the choice immediately made as a means towards it; both of which acts of choice will be dictated by the same judgment of Conscience. What seems to be undeniably true in Kant's dictum is this, that, so long as the agent represents any alternatives as equally possible to him, he can hear the voice of Conscience; and, so long as he hears the voice of Conscience, there are some alternatives which he has the power of adopting in obedience to it.

The unconditional character of the judgments of Conscience gives, it will be noticed, a new turn to the whole question. In the light of this circumstance, the judgments of Conscience become Commands, and the alternatives judged right become acts commanded, that is, Duties. We pass from the ideas of right and wrong directions of action, to the ideas of commands issued, and of duties done in obedience to them. And since these two sets of ideas are combined in the phenomena which they describe in common, we have also a third description drawn from their combination; a description which makes use of the ideas of sentences passed by legal tribunals, and of the opposite claims of disputants, which those tribunals adjudicate. In this imagery, the alternatives offered to choice are personified as disputants putting

forward claims, and Conscience is personified as the judge who gives sentence between them, which sentence it is the duty of both parties to obey. With the idea of duty is thus connected that of a debt due or owing to some one, as well as that of obedience to the command of a superior, and both ideas are expressed in common by the term *ought*, as applied to actions which are right, or due, or morally fitting to be performed, and as opposed to actions which are performed simply, and take place *de facto*, though possibly not *de jure* also.

All this of course is mere imagery, used to express in familiar language the complex facts which are involved in choosing between the particular alternatives offered to choice by the concrete circumstances of daily life and intercourse with others. The use of the imagery does not imply, that the nature of the phenomenon of choosing between alternatives by immanent acts of choice, and of guiding those acts by the judgments of self-consciousness, is derived from the nature of a command issued by a superior, or of a debt due to a creditor, or of a sentence passed by a legal tribunal, any more than the nature of a morally right action is derived from that of an imaginary straight line. The case is just the reverse; I mean that, without the facts of choice and of Conscience, those of lawful command and obedience, of debt lawfully due, and of legal tribunals lawfully established, would have had no recognised existence; the moral validity now implied in the terms *law* and *lawful* would have been wanting to the facts which they are used to describe. These are but the expression and embodiment of the

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former in the institutions of social life, which but for them would have taken very different shapes, even if they could have existed at all. The phrase *in foro conscientiæ* does not imply that a *forum* is the pre-requisite of Conscience. What it implies is, that the history of the development of Conscience is more abstruse than, and therefore capable of illustration by, that of the development of social institutions; not that it is later in beginning to develop actually. It is because man has conscience, and therefore a moral law, that he has social and political law, these latter being systematised commands affecting overt actions, enforced by a superior power, by means of the rewards and punishments which are their legal sanctions. Power alone affords no explanation of the moral validity of law, which attaches to the commands of a superior power only when they are perceived or accepted as just.

The origin of Conscience must be looked for in a certain differentiation of Self-consciousness, and this latter, it has been already shown, arises immediately from, and continues along with, the perception of the Subject as a real material object in a world of material objects. The gradual formation of this latter perception, with its accompanying self-consciousness, may be traced by means of its external signs, in observing the cries, gestures, and other actions of infants. But there are no corresponding marks available, because there is no possible opportunity of observing them, in the case of the earliest beings of the race which we now call Mankind. There are no doubt physical and instinctive actions in the organisms of those earliest

individuals of the race, as there are also in those who now compose it, which are below the threshold, not of self-consciousness only, but of consciousness altogether. These, so far as they are immanent in the Subject, contain among them the proximate real conditions of consciousness and of self-consciousness arising in him; and after their arising, transeunt and overt actions of the same instinctive nature are among the objects which he perceives, and which in consequence he can consciously seek to modify, direct, and control, just as he controls the action of external agents. The desire of doing so, that is, the conscious agent's desire of controlling his own actions, when it is adopted by choice, is the root-volition out of which the practical efficiency of self-consciousness springs, and from which it draws its living power as a mode of self-conscious action. It is our own action, our own character, our own Being, which in fact we preserve, strengthen, and develop, by such self-government and self-control.

But this root-desire and root-volition are not originally recognised as such, nor perceived as what they are in their generality; that is, they do not operate as a single conscious volition, of which particular instances of self-control are cases; but each case of adopting a desire to control our own action presents itself originally on a separate footing, and as it were takes its stand on its own merits. It is only as experience accumulates, both conscious and self-conscious, of ourselves and of the outer world, that the volition of self-guidance and self-control becomes a distinct object of perception, and that, *pari passu*, the self-criticism

which it contains, that is, conscience, obtains recognition as the essential characteristic at once common and peculiar to all its instances.

Moreover the Criterion by which conscience judges volitions attends it, or is inherent in it, from the beginning to the end of its development. I mean the harmony or discord which it is foreseen they are likely to introduce into the conscious life of the agent. But it is not singled out and recognised as what it is, namely, as the criterion of right and wrong, until the comparatively late period, when self-consciousness has been for some time engaged in analysing its own procedure, and thereby in laying the foundations of ethical science. It must have been very early in the history of Conscience, as that mode of self-consciousness which has the agent's volitions for its object, that the fact of a certain fixed nature in different classes of volitions was perceived, grouping them under fixed tendencies implanted in the natural constitution of the human beings who were the agents of the volitions. The agent, for instance, was naturally impelled to adopt the desire for his own self-preservation ; the love of life was a desire founded in a deep-seated tendency, and not opposed by any antagonistic tendency or desire ; it was therefore a desire which he could not avoid approving and adopting by volition, so soon as he became distinctly aware of it as a desire. And of self-preservation the harmonious co-operation of all his bodily capacities and functions must soon have been perceived to be a necessary condition.

From this early stage of the development of conscience, in the history of humanity, to the stage

at which the self-control of volitions is recognised as essential to the existence of the higher life of morality, which is immediately subserved by the organs of redintegration;—the criticism of volitions by conscience recognised as essential to their self-control;—and the criterion of harmony recognised as essential to their criticism by conscience;—the progress has been gradual, even in the case of those communities by which any such higher stage has been attained at all. Gradually the more permanent and deeply seated tendencies, as well in the emotional, intellectual, and imaginative, conscious life, as in the lower animal life of the organism, have become recognised as those to which the less permanent and less deeply seated tendencies, even in modifying them, must be conformed. Gradually the attention of moralists has become directed to discover, which among all the tendencies, which together make up the higher emotional, intellectual, and imaginative life, are in reality, and not merely in an illusion springing from the temporary intensity of the desires by which they are manifested, the most permanent and most deeply seated.

Discord between these tendencies is the death of the whole higher life, just as discord in the capacities and functioning of the bodily powers and organs of sense-perception is the death of the animal organism. But of all the tendencies which compose the substratum of the higher moral life, the most deeply seated and permanent (though not the most obtrusive) is the tendency to preserve and strengthen the organic unity of the whole group, the tendency which manifests itself as the root-

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desire to discover and obey the judgments of conscience. That is the tendency which in the long run has the greatest staying power. The straight upward growth of Character is the End aimed at by the volitions which consciously adopt this root-desire. Hence the exceeding importance and interest of the great problem of the Analysis of Character, which is now so widely attracting the attention of psychologists.

Here, however, it must be noted,—and the point is one of some subtilty, and therefore a likely source of much confusion in ethical theory,—that self-control considered as a desired End, which defines the volition of it, that very root-volition which is known as the origin and mainspring of Conscience, is no *justification* of the volition which it defines, or of Conscience as depending upon it. Justification is a fact wholly within self-consciousness, an idea belonging to the process-content of self-consciousness alone. Like "real condition," justification is not met with, in the shape of justification, in the really existent Course of Nature. It is the non-conscious factor, or constituent element, of the desire and volition in question,—the really-conditioning process upon which the volition of self-control, so far as it is a mode of consciousness, depends,—which is the originating and sustaining agency in Conscience. And therefore what Conscience owes to this non-conscious factor is its *de facto* existence and efficiency as Conscience, not the moral validity or justification of its judgments, or of its Criterion, when, in the natural course of the development of the organism which is its Subject, it has come into existence as a distinct

mode of consciousness, depending on a distinct cerebral function of the Subject. Volition is the mechanism of all consciously selective action, and therefore of Conscience; but the moral validity of the judgments of Conscience, as distinguished from their *de facto* existence, is not derived from this *de facto* mechanism. We can no more suspend the validity of the judgments of Conscience, than we suspend the truth of perceptions generally, upon the contingent fact of the existence of the Subject. The judgments of Conscience, like the immediate perceptions of sense, belong to the nature of consciousness as a knowing, though conditioned for their existence upon real objects inferred, from that knowing, to exist. Consequently the idea of self-control, by which the volition supporting the exercise of Conscience is defined, owes its moral validity to Conscience. and not *vice versa.*

Conscious acts of self-criticism and self-control, like conscious acts of self-preservation and self-defence, are volitional acts which may be traced ultimately to instinctive actions rooted in the constitution of the organism, which are not necessarily and originally accompanied by consciousness. When these instinctive actions, consciousness having supervened upon them, appear as volitions, the kinds of Ends to which they are directed, and which serve to define their nature as volitions, are already determined, being involved in their instinctive and pre-conscious mode or stage of existence. Conscious and volitional acts, alike of self-criticism, self-control, and self-preservation, are thus necessities of the nature and constitution of human Subjects; and the justification of volitions is an idea

without meaning, until volitions to criticise and control the Subject's actions have taken a distinct place over against the same Subject's volitions to act from motives of other kinds, which have a similar origin.

It follows, that the existence of Conscience, as a distinct function of the Subject, though founded in volition, is neither capable, nor in need, of justification; it would be as reasonable to require a justification for being conscious at all, or a reason for the various ultimate qualities of sensation or emotion. Its judgments, on the contrary, are the originating source from which all justification flows. It would therefore be in vain for Eudæmonists, and others of the same school, to contend, that moral validity or justification always lies in the Ends chosen by volition, on the ground that the judgments of Conscience itself are volitional acts which have no other justification, no other validity, than the Ends for which they are passed, namely, those of self-criticism and self-control. These Ends, like that of self-preservation itself, are imposed upon the Subject, not as Ends, nor even as Desires, but as implicit elements or constituent strains in the actions which flow from his *de facto* constitution as a physical organism; and the justification for pursuing them voluntarily, like that of pursuing the End of self-preservation, consists in recognising their conformity to the Criterion of conduct, along with the recognition of their *de facto* origin in the nature of the organism; both which recognitions take place in Conscience itself, when engaged in criticising the particular volitions which consciously adopt them. For Con-

science, it has been already shown, is a function which criticises its own acts of judgment, as well as the acts of other conscious functions.

But here the question will be asked, How can Ethic be a science of general applicability, how can it pretend, as in fact it does pretend, to criticise and guide the conduct of mankind at large, if the jurisdiction of Conscience, on which it is founded, is confined to the immanent acts of individuals, in which alone conscience is a real and inseparable element? Or, to put the question in another shape, How can Conscience have anything to do with judging, guiding, or modifying the actions of men in society, that is, obtain any legitimate authority in social and political matters? At first sight it might seem that, since there is plainly no such thing as a single conscience common to a society, state, or nation, or indeed to any two or more pscychological individuals, an Ethic founded on conscience is precluded from dealing with actions as they are ordinarily understood, or as described by general terms applicable to the actions of all individuals alike.

Now it is quite true, that a great deal of the disrepute and disfavour attaching to the idea of conscience in popular estimation comes from the false supposition, that those who speak of it must necessarily profess to be able to form immediate or, as they are sometimes called, *intuitive* judgments on general questions of practice, say, for instance, such a practice as vivisection in physiological laboratories, and stamp the practice as morally good or bad, not only irrespective of the persons who practise it, but simply from the nature

of the practice itself, whatever it may be, considered as an independent entity. But such a view of conscience, I need hardly point out, is wholly alien from, and indeed diametrically opposed to, the analysis which has here been given. Conscience has immediate jurisdiction only over the acts of the individual conscious being to whom it belongs. It tells the individual only what he himself is to do and think in respect of any given practice, though described in general terms, vivisection for instance; and even this it does not tell him by simple apprehension of the meaning of the name describing it. For this purpose he has to enquire both what it involves, and what its consequences are; and it is in this way, namely, by looking to the consequences of actions, that prudential reasoning legitimately comes into morality, that is to say, as a means of enlightening the conscience of the individual, so as to guide his immediate judgment and action.

Nevertheless the effect of these facts is not to preclude individuals, all or any, from forming probable judgments concerning the morality of the actions of other persons, by analogy with those they form with certainty concerning their own actions, and on the assumption that those persons are also endowed with conscience. It is in this mediate way, and in this restricted sense, that the judgments and classifications of Ethic, relating to actions generally, are formed in the first instance, and become legitimately applicable to estimate the actions of persons other than the person who forms them. It is almost needless to add, that such judgments are not judgments of conscience;

they are more or less accurately formed judgments of a more or less rudimentary Ethic, judgments of which conscience in individuals is indeed an indispensable condition, but which are wholly destitute of its peculiar authority.

It is only by the consensus of individuals that ethical judgments become generally established, and that Ethic itself comes into existence as a practical science of general applicability. Considered as the offspring of conscience, it may be said to purchase its applicability to general classes of action, to the actions of men in general, and to the joint or combined actions of men in societies, by surrender of that immediate jurisdiction over the actions of individuals, which is the prerogative of its parent, the individual conscience alone. Ethic therefore is a generally applicable science, notwithstanding that conscience, which is its ultimate and most essential basis, has immediate authority over the individual alone.

Of this firm and all-essential foundation we must never lose sight, when endeavouring either to construct or criticise an ethical system which shall be generally applicable, and capable of adoption and enforcement by public opinion or by law. Every such system must arise out of mutual discussion and comparison of the views of individuals, as to what is desirable for all to do, or join in doing, that is, as to the Ends ultimate and proximate of the community, a discussion limited and controlled only by the conscience of the individual, which refuses its assent to any action, or to joining in any action, which it thinks wrong for itself to do or join in doing.

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The individual conscience has thus a negative voice in determining the rules, principles, and customs, which are to be established by law or by public opinion, that is, incorporated in the general Ethical system. The positive suggestions, or ends and means suggested, as desirable for the community or for its members, prior to this negative criticism, are suggestions of expediency for the common benefit, not of moral rightness. In a general system of Ethic they hold a position analogous to that held by desires in volition, prior to their being adopted by acts of conscious choice. They are by no means of themselves Ends which give moral validity to the general course of action directed to attain them, nor do they acquire such validity except so far as they are approved by the conscience of those individuals who agree to their adoption and effectuation, by raising the actions necessary to effect them to the rank of duties on the part of individuals.

In one word, it is only by being founded in the conscience of individuals, or passing, as it were, through its mint, that any of the acts or omissions prescribed by Ethic, Public Opinion, or Positive Law, are stamped with the character of moral rightness or validity.—To argue, as so many do, from the discrepancies and contradictions arising between different systems of ethical opinion, all claiming moral validity (as for instance the contradictory views on the subject of vivisection), to the contradictory nature of the dictates of conscience, is an *ignoratio elenchi;* and the conclusion drawn therefrom, that conscience is self-contradictory, and therefore non-existent in any true sense, is conse-

quently illegitimate. The truth is, that ethical opinion is purged of contradictions, and Ethic itself constituted as a rational science, only by being brought into harmony with the dictates of conscience in individuals, it being also the nature of conscience, as we have seen, to be self-criticising and self-correcting.

The first questions to arise with regard to all such duties as are imposed by ethic, law, or public opinion, as well as to those which are commanded solely by judgments of the individual conscience, are these: Towards whom are the duties primarily owing, and to whom is the individual conscious agent primarily responsible for fulfilling them? Supposing ourselves in presence of the ordinary world of Persons and Things, with which the individual Subject is surrounded in civilised life at the present day, the answer to these questions will yield the first rough classification of Duties, the first outlines of their systematic treatment as the object-matter of Ethic.

Primarily the duties are owing to the authority which imposes them, the judgments of Conscience; and the Subject is responsible to his own Conscience for obedience to its commands. In thus separating Conscience from the Subject we are of course personifying it, since we imagine it as a personal judge, or supreme tribunal, having power to enforce its own decrees. This again belongs to the imagery which we draw from civilised experience, and use to express the simple facts of conscious volition and self-conscious criticism, which we have already analysed in their essential nature. Nevertheless the justice and appropriateness of the imagery are

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supported, in this as in other instances, by facts of consciousness belonging to the nature of the real actions analysed. The decrees of a tribunal are enforced by penalties; and the penalty for disregarding the duties, or disobeying the commands, of Conscience consists in the feeling of Remorse of Conscience, which is graduated according to the offence, from the lowest sense of uneasiness to almost intolerable intensities of moral pain. Penitence, Repentance, Change of Mind (μετάνοια), and a return to Obedience, are the only remedies, or even alleviations, of these feelings.

Eudæmonists, and others of the same school, cannot satisfactorily account for the distinctive character of the feelings of Repentance and Remorse, any more than for the sense of moral validity attaching to just laws and decisions of the civil power; that is, they cannot point out, in the ideas which are the representational framework of these specific feelings, any special feature which differentiates them from the representational framework of the more general feelings of Regret and Sense of Failure. Regret for ruined happiness or lost opportunities of securing it, a painful feeling which may also be of extreme intensity, is, with its varieties, the only feeling for which they can rationally account. The specific feeling of Remorse, both by itself and as an element in the specific resolve of Repentance, they must explain away as something abnormal and illusory, a morbid terror due to overwrought or perhaps superstitious imagination. They must adopt the cynical dictum,—"worse than a crime, a blunder,"—as a true expression for every misdeed which carries with it no appreciable gain to

the perpetrator. For on their theory the preference of a less to a greater good is the essence of criminality, and moral delinquency consists in failing to secure happiness.

The rewards of Conscience, when its commands are obeyed and its duties performed, are summed up in the one term, Peace of Mind; a feeling capable of many shades of difference, and many degrees of intensity, the full blessing of which can perhaps be best appreciated by those who have lost it, or by those who have regained it by repentance, after suffering the torments of remorse. And this again is a feeling, the distinctive character of which cannot be accounted for by reference to any corresponding feature in its representational framework, on any system of Eudæmonism, although of course it will fall, along with all other satisfactions, under the general description of Happiness or Welfare.

The failure on the part of Eudæmonistic theories to find a place for feelings which spring from the normal action of Conscience stands in striking contrast with the readiness wherewith a place is found, in genuine Ethic, for the desires for Happiness, Enjoyment, Advantage, and Success, which are the be-all and end-all of Eudæmonism. In genuine Ethic, these desires rank as natural motives of action. In this respect, therefore, genuine Ethic is the more satisfactory of the two. It both accounts for facts which its rival is unable to account for, and it includes the fundamental principle of its rival as a special part of its own system. It is moreover difficult to see, assuming an Eudæmonistic theory to be true, in what philo-

sophical system it can itself find a place; I mean, with what *rationale* of the Universe it can be in accordance. As a theory, we have already seen, that it must rank as a positive science only. But then, what place can it have in philosophy? It is only as ethical that it could gain admission there. Attempts to frame ethical Eudæmonistic theories may indeed be expected to continue, so long as self-will remains a prominent constituent in the nature of self-conscious beings. And their refutation will ever, as now, consist in showing, that they are not ethical, and not philosophical.

Coming lastly to the particular Duties commanded by Conscience, we find them usually classed by reference to the Persons, towards or in respect of whom their performance is commanded. Thus the commands of the Decalogue fall under the two heads of duty towards God and duty towards our neighbour. Both classes alike are duties owed to Conscience. And if, as we shall see reason for thinking in the sequel, Conscience may be figuratively characterised as the Voice of God in the Soul, both classes of duties, both "Tables of the Law," are alike duties owing to God, though those of the first Table are to be performed towards Him also, as those of the second are to be performed towards our neighbour. All duties of whatever kind, in being commanded by and owed to Conscience, are commanded by and owed to God, if God is indeed the primary source, in the Unseen World, from which the judgments of Conscience flow.

The explanation of this arrangement of the "Tables of the Law," resting as it does on a combina-

tion of two modes of dividing the object-matter, is probably to be found in the circumstance, that the Decalogue was intended to be the basis, not of a code of morals simply, but of a code at once moral, religious, legal, and political; and, in fact, contains the ultimate theoretical foundations of a Theocracy. But if we simply follow the indications of the foregoing analysis, the classification of Duties, by the Persons towards or in respect of whom they are to be performed, will be somewhat different. The two branches of the Course of Nature, to which the actions of the conscious agent are directed by Conscience to conform, will be the guide of the classification. These branches are (1) the forces and desires operative in the agent himself, and (2) those operative in the rest of sentient Nature; for here it is sentient beings only which can be considered as in any way Persons, that is, as consciously affected by actions of any kind. The duties commanded by Conscience will accordingly fall under two heads, Duties towards ourselves, or self-regarding duties, and Duties towards other sentient beings; what are Duties on our part being, in every case, the foundation of corresponding Rights in those beings towards whom they are to be performed.

But however we may classify Duties in respect of the persons towards whom they are to be performed, and in whom they become the foundation of Rights as against the persons owing them, it is essential not to confuse the person or persons, towards or in respect of whom the duties are owing, with the authority imposing them, the authority which speaks in Conscience, the authority

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to which they are primarily owing, and which is the source of their existence as duties. It is not within the power of the persons towards or in respect of whom duties imposed by conscience are owing, to remit the obligation of performing them, however willing or even eager they may be to do so, from love, or pity, or a passion for self-sacrifice. It is not in the power of a suicide to remit the self-regarding duty of preserving his own life, supposing, what is probably the usual case, that he disobeys his conscience in destroying it. The claims of Conscience are paramount and indefeasible, and Conscience cannot at once command and remit the self-same act.—This would be different, if Rights were the foundation of Duties, instead of *vice versa*, or in other words, if Rights not Duties were the foundation of Morality. What is called Legalism in morality has its origin in this perverse conception, a conception wholly unwarranted, and indeed precluded by a true analysis.

The conception of Rights, in the beings towards or in respect of whom duties are to be performed, carries us over into the domains of Jurisprudence and Politic, in the large sense of those terms, and shows the point at which social Law is founded in Morality. The conception of Duties alone is strictly ethical. Among duties towards ourselves may be mentioned the normal obligation to preserve and promote the health and efficiency of all our physical, sensitive, intellectual, emotional, and active powers, in harmony and due relation, whether co-ordinate or subordinate, with one another. I say *normal*, because the sacrifice of ourselves, extending even to the sacrifice of life itself, may frequently

become a duty. Over duties of the other class, duties to be performed towards other sentient beings, the *Golden Rule*, of doing by others as we in their place should reasonably desire that they, in our place, should do by us, is usually and no doubt rightly held to be the paramount maxim. What the special duties are, which, under this maxim, are due on our part towards non-rational but sentient creatures, is a question of extreme difficulty, and one which has hardly yet been distinctly considered, much less faced, by mankind at large. It is the signal honour of Bentham, great apostle of Utilitarianism though he was, to have included all sentient beings among the objects towards whom duties are commanded by morality, thus according to them rights which are usually restricted to mankind alone, or at the utmost to those animals who, in some well marked degree, share with man the gift and prerogative of Reason.

The foregoing remarks seem adequate to remove an objection very commonly made to the Ethic of Duty, as compared to the Ethic of Happiness, I mean the objection of vagueness and unpracticality. What we seek in an ethical system, it is said, is some definite guidance, some definite precepts, as to what it is best to do or aim at doing, and more especially in particular cases where opinion is at fault, or different opinions are in conflict. It is a mere mockery in such cases to tell us to consult Conscience, whose dictates may be pleaded in support of the most contradictory courses, without the possibility of criticism or refutation. A common End or Purpose in view, which all can recognise, and in which all may sooner or later be brought to

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acquiesce, is a necessary pre-requisite of all guidance in particular cases, whether of individual or of public action.—This latter statement of the objector's must certainly be granted, and the foregoing remarks have shown, I think, how such a common End or Purpose can be established, on the basis of taking Conscience as the ultimate guide to right action.

But from this it by no means follows, that the common End or Purpose which all men can recognise, and in which all men may sooner or later be brought to acquiesce, is the same in the Ethic of Duty as in the Ethic of Happiness. That common End or Purpose, as conceived by the Ethic of Duty, can never consist in the production of the greatest happiness for a community, any more than for the individual. It consists in the formation of the noblest self-consistent individual Characters, and consequently of a community the collective action of which, bearing the impress of that consistent nobility, shall aim at the formation and development of a noble character, not only in all its own members, individually different as they are and must continue, but also in all other individuals and all other communities, with whom it may be brought into contact. The formation and development of Character is the one common End or Purpose, which the Ethic of Duty sets up, in consequence of its criterion of right; an end or purpose equally practical, and equally intelligible, with that of the attainment of Happiness, which is the end proposed by the opposite theory.

§ 5. Free-will.

§ 5.[1] But before proceeding to speak farther of

[1] This Section, originally written for the place where it now stands, has in substance appeared as an article in Mind for April 1891, No. LXII (Vol. XVI.

Duties, and other special consequences involved in the Criterion of right and wrong, it is necessary to take account of a theory of volition, which, if tenable, would rob the words *duty*, *conscience*, *right* and *wrong*, of all distinctive meaning, and make of Ethic a positive, instead of a practical and philosophical science. I mean the theory which maintains, that immanent volitions are really compelled actions, or in other words, denies the fact of Free-will. The question relates primarily, not to overt acts but to immanent volitions or acts of choice; and it is usually admitted, as indeed it would be impossible to deny, that in choosing we have the feeling known as the *sense of freedom*, a feeling *as if* we were free to choose. What is denied is, first, that this feeling is by itself evidence for the reality of freedom, a denial the justice of which must be admitted; and secondly, that freedom in any kind of action is a reality, or even a possibility, in the large sense of being conceivable or construable to thought.

The real and essential nature of volitional action is thus brought into question. And it is evident that, if we have indeed no power to choose otherwise than we choose actually, in any single instance of what we call immanent volition, we have no real power of choosing at all, that is, no volition as we have hitherto understood the term; and therefore that it is of little practical consequence what

of the First Series), with some few additions, prefatory and controversial remarks, suitable to that form of it. These are now omitted. At the same time, considerable amplifications have here and there been introduced in revision.—I would also call my readers' attention to an earlier treatment of the same subject, namely, a paper entitled *Free-will and Compulsory Determinism, —a Dialogue,—Biatas and Philophron;* read originally before the Aristotelian Society in March 1885, and printed in MIND for October 1885, No XL. Vol. X. of the First Series.

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names we give to the different parts of the mechanism involved in what we call choosing, or how we describe the rules by which we seem to strive to direct that mechanism to choose, as we call it, aright. And moreover, without real freedom of choice there could be no real moral responsibility; and the sense of it, if it were still felt, would have, like the sense of freedom, to be classed as an illusion. The question, then, is one of the deepest significance for Ethic. In fact we might, in the Ethic of duty, consider the whole ethical domain as divisible into two main portions, the first being that of the nature of volition considered in respect of its freedom, the second that of the nature of right volition, in case, but only in case, the enquiry under the first head should issue in favour of Free-will.

The action in choosing belongs to the agent, the Subject, and all questions concerning its nature as an action, of which the question of its freedom, that is of Free-will, is one, are strictly questions of psychology. On the other hand, the judgment of such actions, taken in their essential nature, by Conscience, consists in an immediate perception of their comparative value, and belongs to consciousness as a knowing, in which the object *is* what it is *known as*. Hence arise at once the unappealable character of Conscience, and the circumstance that the enquiry into the subject is a question of metaphysic. The question of Free-will and that of Conscience are together exhaustive of ethical phenomena, and to treat them in relation to one another is therefore the indispensable business of philosophy.

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I propose, then, once more to consider the much debated question of Free-will, and to give a brief, though I hope also a sound and sufficient, solution of the difficulties with which it has been invested. I shall do so by applying to the complex psychological phenomenon, known as Free-will, that distinction between nature and genesis, which has guided the whole of our analysis up to the present point. That is, I shall consider separately in the first place that physiological action upon which all human consciousness, and therefore volition as a conscious action, proximately depends, in order to see whether and in what sense it is really free, when taken apart from its dependent consciousness; and secondly I shall consider it together with the consciousness dependent on it, that is, as the complex action which is known to us, by or through its dependent consciousness, as volition or volitional action. In other words, I shall speak first of the nature of Freedom or free action, then of volition as action of a special kind. It seems to me, that it is mainly for want of keeping these two lines of thought distinct, or in other words, in consequence of treating the really complex question of volition as if it were simple, and volition an unanalysable action or process, that the final solution of the difficulties attending it has been so long among the *desiderata* of ethical knowledge.

I begin, then, with the remark, that to take the physiological action in volition apart from the dependent consciousness, by which it is characterised as volition, is to treat it simply as a part of the physical order of real conditioning, or of the Course of Nature, conceived solely as a single,

though complex, sequence of actions and re-actions of material things, or parts of Matter, one upon another;—a sequence which has *de facto* existence, and in which, by hypothesis, there are no alternatives;—in short as an object falling under the First Modal Conception, the conception of existence simply as existing.

This is a point essential to notice. Alternatives are necessarily excluded from the *de facto* Course of Nature, or Real Conditioning, by the fact that we can think of it as simply existent only by abstracting from the element of Contingency involved in the thought of real conditioning, by which we arrived at it; by abstracting, I mean, from the idea of what would have been, or might have been, under other circumstances, instead of what is, has been, or will be, under the actual circumstances. We thus think of it as a single, complex, linked, sequence of objects and events which actually take place, exclusive of imagined or conceived objects and events, which might exist or take place, but do not; that is, exclusive of possibilities, impossibilities, and alternatives. Just as the conditionality in our thought of the relation, by which one thing or event is linked to another, belongs not to the real objects thought of, but only to our objective thought of them, so also do the characters of chance, necessity, contingency, and possible alternatives. These and the like are all characters which the phenomena bear in relation to our thought under other modal conceptions, and their names express what we imagine or conceive concerning those phenomena, not what we conceive them to be actually, and independently of any

other of our conceptions than those comprised in the simple conception of their *de facto* existence in *de facto* relations to one another.

So also with the conception of Laws of Nature. We cannot but conceive the *de facto* Course of Nature as a sequence and co-existence of actions and events taking place between material things, which are real conditions and conditionates of one another. For this conception, though subjectively arrived at, is found, when arrived at, to represent facts of perception which we everywhere observe existing independently of our conception of them, and which serve to verify our conception. It is of percepts, that is to say, of objects and events having perceptual form, whether observed or inferred, that the *de facto* Course of Nature is conceived to be composed; and among these perceptual facts are included their relations to one another, provided those relations have perceptual form. Hence the conceptions of force and energy exerted by portions of matter on one another, and of actions performed by material agents upon one another, that is to say, of agents, actions, and re-actions, are involved in our conception of real existence in the full sense of the term, even when we discount, so to speak, and abstract from, the conceptual process by which we arrive at the conception of a single *de facto* real Course of Nature, existing independently of our mode of conceiving it.

Now it is only in and by arriving at this conception, that we arrive at the further conception of Laws of Nature, that is, of uniformities which are found in the actions and re-actions (called by us

conditions,) which constitute the Course of Nature as existing *de facto* and independently of our conceptions of it. It is only as thought of by us, not as uniformities observable in Nature, that Laws of Nature appear to exclude alternatives and possibilities from the *de facto* Course of Nature. For these are already excluded by the previously attained conception of the single *de facto* Course of Nature, which is the pre-supposition of the conception of its Laws as conceptual expressions of its perceptual uniformities. Laws of Nature exist only in our objective thought, not in Nature as the object thought of thereby. On the other hand, the play of forces in and between material things has already been distinguished, in Book II., as that object, thought of as existing independently of our conceptions of it, the laws of which all positive science is directed to discover.

Such, then, being the true conception of the single *de facto* order of Nature or of Real Conditioning, the question which concerns us here is this,—Has Freedom any place among those conceptions under which we are compelled to bring the *de facto* order of real and physical existence, in order to understand it? Or, otherwise stated,—Are there any facts in that *de facto* order (which it must be remembered excludes alternative possibilities) which compel us to form the conception of freedom in order to characterise them?.

And here, as everywhere, the first question is one of metaphysic or subjective analysis, namely, What do we mean by *freedom?* What *is* the conception, the necessity of which is in question? The primary common-sense meaning of being *free* is

being unfettered, unhindered, unconstrained. And thus the terms *free* and *freedom* are plainly applicable only, if at all, to actions or to agents in respect of their actions, and therefore pre-suppose those conceptions, which, as we have seen, are involved in our conception of the *de facto* order of real conditioning. But in what respect are agents or their actions thought of as free? Free from what, —Free for what? For the notion of freedom, or of being free, or unfettered, is plainly a notion current in common-sense thinking, and the present question concerns only its scientific validity, or the roots which it has in the *de facto* order of Nature.

Now in the case of agents generally, or in other words of agents as such, disregarding the particular kinds to which they may belong, these questions are implicitly answered by perceiving from what and for what it is not intended to declare them free, by affirming their freedom. It is not intended to declare them free from Laws of Nature, inasmuch as they are parts of that *de facto* Order of Nature, the whole of which exhibits those *de facto* uniformities, for which Laws of Nature are the name. Neither is it intended to declare them free (except incidentally, as we shall see presently) for being acted on by extraneous forces. This we should call their being exposed to those forces, not their being free for them to act upon. It follows that, in speaking of agents as free, it is intended to declare them free from compulsion or constraint by extraneous forces, and free for actions resulting from their own nature and constitution.

But no agent which is part and parcel of the *de facto* order of Nature can be wholly and entirely

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free in this sense of the term, because it cannot be what it is except in connection and interaction with other parts of that order. Consequently it is only so far as it is free for acting in accordance with its own nature and constitution, and from compulsion or constraint by extraneous forces, that an agent or its action can truly be called free; while conversely it can and must be called free, so far as, or in the respects in which, it is capable of so acting. Freedom as we positively know it, and in all cases which fall within our ken, is always partial, never total; always freedom in some respects, but not in all. But this does not affect its reality as a fact rooted in the *de facto* order of Nature, and discoverable therein under the strictest examination we can make. And it is undeniable, that many actions and many agents, of the most various kinds, are free in this partial sense of the term.

For instance, a merely mechanical agent may be free in the restricted sense implied by the term *mechanical*, which describes the agent's special nature. A weathercock, say, is free for turning in all directions in the same horizontal plane, in obedience to changes in the wind, and free from constraint preventing its action in that particular way. It is strictly and properly free for the action of turning, incidentally free to be governed by changes of the wind. A seed put into the ground, and preserved from influences unfavourable to its growth and development, is free from those restrictions on its inherent powers, and free for developing them to their full extent, according to its kind. So also, conceivably at least, the cerebral organ of volition, in its action of deliberating and choosing (though

with these as modes of consciousness we are not just now concerned), is free in exactly the same sense, allowing for its difference of kind. It is free for that action of part upon part, which we call deliberating between, and thereby changing the strength of motives, and deciding for that which, in consequence of that action, becomes the strongest; it is free from constraint preventing its action in this particular way. The physiological brain organism is free, so far as the interaction of its parts is not subjected to extraneous constraint; and its resulting action is free, so far as it is determined by the internal interaction of its parts.

Different classes of natural objects are in fact capable of different degrees of freedom, corresponding to the rank which they hold in the scale of being, in order of increasing complexity of composition or organisation. The broadest line of distinction falls between inorganic and organic matter, above which line a consensus of parts composing the organism begins to show itself as the condition of its special re-action upon its environment. Inorganic substances we never consider free; because the putting forth of their re-action always takes place in certain definite ways, determined by the kind and amount of the forces to which they are from time to time exposed, notwithstanding that the kind of re-action which they put forth depends upon their own intrinsic nature or quality, at least as much as upon the nature of the forces which call that re-action forth. Animal organisms which can move from place to place, contract and expand their own substance, put forth tentacles, and so on, in immediate dependence upon changes which go on

within their substance, afford the first indisputable evidence of what we call freedom, that is, of the preponderance of intrinsic over extrinsic changes as the immediate determinants of their actions. And this preponderance becomes more marked, the higher we advance in the scale of organised beings.

Thus, although it is true, that freedom is always partial, never total, yet it is also true, and indeed involved in the very fact of its partiality, that it is nowhere wholly absent in any case of action and re-action which is included in the *de facto* course of Nature. For nothing can act, in the sense of exerting influence, upon other things, unless it has a positive nature or constitution, from which that action or influence proceeds. In that sense, and to that extent, its action is free, because determined by nothing but itself. Its freedom would disappear only with the disappearance of the agent itself. The *vis insita* which is essential to all matter, and to every particle of it, is the ultimate source or basis of freedom, being the ultimate source of all the various activities which matter displays. The fact of freedom or free action is therefore deeply rooted in the *de facto* course of Nature, as deeply and ineradicably as the fact of action and re-action, and is as independent of the conception of alternative possibilities, as that *de facto* order of events is itself conceived to be. It follows, that freedom, conceived as a fact belonging to that order, and therefore apart from alternative possibilities, is identical with self-determination on the part of the agent who is said to be free in respect of his action. And it is as making part of this *de facto* order, that the definition of liberty (which I take to be synony-

mous with freedom) given by Hobbes is true: "Liberty is the absence of all the impediments to action that are not contained in the nature and intrinsical quality of the agent." [2]

The presence of self-determination, then, in the organ or agent immediately concerned in immanent acts of volition, and to such a considerable degree as to compel us to characterise those acts as mainly and essentially self-determined, though performed in connection and interaction with other organs, is the point which we have to prove, in proving the freedom of volitions as acts of choice. But in order to prove this, it must first be shown, that there is a real and positively known agent, as a requisite constituent of a real and positively known action. A real action is nothing more nor less than a real agent in operation. Real freedom is a property or character inseparable from such actions. In order, then, to have a positive knowledge of real freedom, we must have some positive knowledge of the real actions from which it is inseparable; and to have a positive knowledge of real actions, we mnst have some positive knowledge of the real agent, whose actions they are.

The neglect of these requirements, consequent on the attempt to treat volition as a simple and unanalysable action or process, leads straightway to two opposite sophisms, which customarily contend with each other for possession of the field of action. I mean, that to set up an abstract or transcendental Mind, or Ego, as the Subject or real agent in all conscious action, is to set up as a reality something

[2] *Of Liberty and Necessity.* Hobbes' English Works. Molesworth's edition. Vol. IV. p. 273.

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of which we have no positive knowledge, and which, so far as our knowledge goes, is an unreality. Upon which the result follows, that this unreal agent may be treated either (1) as pure activity, and thus as an absolute originator of action, which is the sophism of the Indeterminists, or (2) as pure passivity, that is, as an inert recipient of impulses, which is the sophism of the Compulsory Determinists.[3] The plain fact, which cuts the ground from below the feet of both, is, that an abstract entity, like the Mind or Ego so imagined, can neither act nor be acted on, being a mere descriptive word hypostasised, empty and unreal, and incapable of forming part of the *de facto* order of Real Conditioning. We are deluded by the grammatical construction of "*I*," as a nominative case, with verbs active and passive; and so led to attribute to it a separate and substantial existence, without asking either for the analysis of the perception we have of it, or for the real conditions upon which that perception proximately depends. These two last named things, the analysis and the real conditions

[3] The ordinary English Empiricist (a term which includes many men of great ability and deserved celebrity) recognises no difference between Determinism and Compulsory Determinism; whereas, in fact, Determinism, as opposed to Indeterminism, includes Self-determination as well as determination by extraneous agencies, and on equally valid grounds. Now Self-determination is Freedom. The question which is really important for the reality of Free-will does not lie between Determinists and Indeterminists, but between Determinists in the strict and proper sense of the word, who maintain the uniformity of law, and those particular members of the school, who identify the uniformity of law with the coercion or compulsion, *ab extra*, of one agent by another, and who ought rightly to be called Compulsory Determinists. The Indeterminists' notion, that the uniformity of Law can be interfered with by agencies which are not subject to uniform Law, is literally inconceivable. It is the attribution of compelling power to uniform law, wherever met with, which, if it could be proved, would be fatal to the reality of Freedom. And conversely, self-determination is the only kind of Freedom worth arguing for, because it is the only kind which is positively conceivable.

of the perception, are the realities involved in the term "*I*"; and before we can discuss the question of Free-will as a reality, we must have in our thoughts a real agent and real actions, positively known to consciousness in both ways, as the object-matter of the discussion.[4]

Of the Indeterminist sophism it is not necessary to speak at length. Its effect is to maintain the reality of Free-will as a fact, however fallacious may be the reasons alleged in support of it; and then, the fact being admitted, and the consequence of moral responsibility drawn, the rank of Ethic as a practical science is vindicated, and its validity continues unimpaired. The errors involved in the original sophism are of a theoretical nature, the practical consequences of which are confined to the discredit which they cast on the fact of Free-will, when their fallacy is discovered. The empty and fictitious Ego of the Indeterminists is really a superfluous encumbrance on their ethical theory, from first to last; and at every stage of their ethical argument the real facts can be seen shining through, or at least can easily be read into, their fallacious language, without doing any violence to the facts themselves. But this is no defence of the theoretical error, which is at the root of the sophism. Their Ego, taken literally as they mean it to be taken, is a non-entity, and involves the inconceivable idea of action originated *ex nihilo*. Such action would be strictly what we intend by the word *chance;* the idea of *real chance* itself being also

[4] On this and indeed on most of the cardinal points of the Free-will controversy, I would beg my readers to refer to my paper, already cited, *Free-will and Compulsory Determinism; A Dialogue: Biatas and Philophron.*

inconceivable. No such action can possibly be the ground of moral responsibility, in which the idea and fact of Law is everywhere involved. An agent who was perpetually originating actions *ex nihilo, mero motu,* without antecedent motives, would be wholly lawless, and on that account inconceivable, as well as inconceivable on other grounds. If free-will and moral responsibility could only be maintained on the footing of ideas of this stamp, they must of necessity be regarded as illusions.

The sophism of the Compulsory Determinists, on the other hand, is far more serious for ethical theory, inasmuch as it involves a contradiction of the fact of Free-will. The same fictitious entity is set up as by the Indeterminists, only in the character, not of an originator, but of a passive recipient or instrument of action, exerted upon it according to uniform laws of Nature. Determinism means the doctrine of uniformity in the laws of Nature. Compulsory Determinism means the doctrine, that this uniformity of law is an universal force or compelling agency. This of itself is a sophism, inasmuch as it not only has never been proved, but consists in confusing the two well known senses of *necessity*, the necessity of compulsion and the necessity of thought. But it is only a part of that sophism which I have here, in reference to Free-will, called the sophism of the Compulsory Determinists. This consists in their hypostasising the Mind or Ego as a passive recipient, to aid their imagination in hypostasising the laws of Nature as compelling agents; since it is only as exerted upon something not itself, that the reality of a compelling agency can be construed to

thought. The Ego according to this sophism exists solely for the purpose of lending its name to a certain class of actions, those accompanied by self-consciousness, and so keeping the real facts composing those actions obscure, and not for the purpose of entering into action and re-action with other real agents, as, if it were indeed a reality, must be the case. "You *cannot help* acting as you do act," we may imagine the Compulsory Determinists saying, "owing to the uniformity of the laws governing the real agencies of which you are the creature." They thus, on their part, hypostasise abstract Force as the only real agent, in all the so-called actions of individual beings, reducing the real Subjects, or doers of them, to pure hypostasised passivities, just as the Indeterminists hypostasise the abstract Ego as an agent. But abstract Force hypostasised is as much a fictitious and positively inconceivable entity, as the purely passive beings upon or in which it is supposed to act. When the Compulsory Determinist says 'you cannot help acting as you do act,' he has, logically speaking, destroyed the individual he is addressing; there is nothing left to be compelled. It is as impossible, in positive thought, to go behind the real concrete Subject that acts, as it is to go behind the real concrete Subject that thinks, or the real concrete Subject that feels. If we are real Sentients, we must also, and in the same sense, be real Agents.

But the time-honoured controversy between "Necessarians" and "Libertarians," with its *liberum arbitrium indifferentiæ* and the rest of it, insoluble so long as a fictitious entity is the object imagined as the bone of contention, enters on an

entirely new phase, and assumes a wholly different character, from the moment when a positively knowable physical substance, the neuro-cerebral system with its physical adjuncts, whatever these may turn out to be, instead of an hypostasised word, such as *Mind* or *Ego*, is taken as the real Agent or Subject of conscious action.

Venerable as the assumption of an immaterial agent may be, it is still nothing more than a traditional assumption. When we trace back the various departments of knowledge to their sources in experience, we find, that the distinction between consciousness and its proximate real conditions, whatever these may be, and not the distinction between Mind and Body, is the true philosophical basis of the science of psychology. Proceeding on this basis and looking, not for causes, but for the real conditions of the phenomena which we are investigating, we farther find, that, in all psychological questions, it is indispensable to have some hypothesis or other as to the nature of the real agency upon which the phenomena of consciousness depend, and to which we refer them for explanation of their genesis and history. An hypostasised word is useless, and worse than useless, as a working hypothesis. I therefore adopt here, as everywhere else in the present work, the only remaining alternative for which there are positive grounds, namely, the neuro-cerebral system, as the immediate real condition of consciousness including volition; but here also, as everywhere else, solely in the character of a working hypothesis, without professing that, even if it should be verified by a sufficient experience as the true theoretical basis,

it would solve the ulterior and wholly distinct question,—How, or in virtue of what hidden affinity, consciousness is attached, as a dependent concomitant, to a physical agent;—though it must also be remarked, that the corresponding question would be equally remote from solution, in case the alternative hypothesis, that of an immaterial substance or agent, were the one adopted.

The alternative which I thus adopt is in fact that which Locke suggests, though without adopting it, in a famous passage near the beginning of Book IV. Chap. III. of his great *Essay*, in which, among much else to the same purpose, he says: "We have the ideas of matter and thinking, but possibly shall never be able to know whether any mere material being thinks or no; it being impossible for us, by the contemplation of our own ideas, without revelation, to discover whether Omnipotence has not given to some systems of matter fitly disposed, a power to perceive and think, or else joined and fixed to matter so disposed a thinking immaterial substance; it being, in respect of our notions, not much more remote from our comprehension to conceive that God can, if he pleases, superadd to matter a faculty of thinking, than that he should superadd to it another substance with a faculty of thinking."—To me it seems much nearer our comprehension, instead of only being "not much more remote from" it, to conceive the connection between matter and thinking immediate and direct, than to conceive a wholly imaginary substance interposed between them. And for two reasons. First because the latter hypothesis involves two assumptions of an unknown nexus instead of one. Secondly

because the agent assumed by it is nothing more than a shadow-man, within or behind the real man of ordinary experience, whose consciousness and conscious actions are to be explained, and thus virtually offers the *explicandum* over again as its own *explicatio.*—But to return to the consequences of the immaterialist hypothesis.

The case is very different with the opposite conclusion to that of the Indeterminists, though drawn from the same hypothesis as theirs, that of an abstract and empty Ego, by using it as a pure passivity, which is the sophism of the Compulsory Determinists. The use which they make of the fiction is wholly different, though equally fallacious. They use it to deny, not to assert, the fact of Free-will as a reality. With them, the pure passivity of the supposed agent secures its unreality as an agent, and consequently the unreality of its supposed acts. *Nihil agentis nulla realitas.* These so-called acts of the fictitious agent, the purely passive Ego, are resolved into a conflict of motives issuing in the emergence of one as victor over the rest, which emergence it would plainly be an illusion to call an act of choice on the part of the Ego, even supposing it to exist. Not the Ego, but whatever is from time to time the strongest motive, which imposes itself on the Ego, is the principal agent which, by its victory over weaker motives, determines, in their view, what we fondly call the Ego's action. The original fallacy is here precisely the same as in Indeterminism. And if this were the only argument brought forward by Compulsory Determinists against the fact of Free-will, we might be content with applying the same brief criticism to both, and

pass at once to consider the real mechanism of choice, in which freedom will be found an essential feature.

But, as already pointed out, there is another notable confusion of ideas, used as an argument by Compulsory Determinists, against the reality of Free-will, sometimes alone, sometimes in connection with the fallacy of the abstract Ego, which cannot be so briefly dismissed. This confusion (as already said) consists in supposing, that, when the will is said to be free, the freedom intended is a freedom from subjection to Laws of Nature. Now it is only Indeterminists who can logically intend a freedom of this kind, when they speak of the will being free.

They indeed must do so, if they are consistent; inasmuch as their abstract or transcendental Ego, which is Chance personified, is *eo ipso* imagined as free from Law, in the sense of law natural, or Uniformity of Nature and the Course of Nature. How otherwise could it originate action *ex nihilo*, and *mero motu?* All Determinists, on the other hand, simply in virtue of their determinism, and whether they are Compulsory Determinists or not, hold and must hold the doctrine of the Uniformity of Nature, and in fact of the universal reign of Law, throughout the whole range of existence. Existence is not conceivable apart from Law. The attempt so to conceive it issues only in the idea of *Chaos*, which is unrealisable in thought. The foundations of the conception of Law are laid in the most universal elements of all perception and all consciousness; I mean, in the form of all perception, Time, and in the forms of all visual and tactual perceptions, Time and Spatial Extension together,

as well as in the ultimate forms of conception and thought. To conceive anything whatever absolved or free from Law is to conceive its existence ceasing. Pure non-existence alone has no law.

But Determinism in this sense, which means holding the universality of law, in the whole of Nature and Existence, is a very different thing from what I have called Compulsory Determinism, which holds that all actions are ultimately due to a compulsion inherent in laws of Nature, a compulsion which, being thus in all cases exerted upon so-called agents from without, thereby also makes them appear to exercise compulsion one upon another. Laws of Nature and real agents external to the will, or to the agent in volition, are in fact the two supposed sources of compulsion, on which, as will appear in its place, the principal objections against Free-will are founded. In a word, the fallacy of Compulsory Determinism is to treat Law as if it was a special Force, controlling all other forces and energies.

I argue therefore, that, although Compulsory Determinists are right in asserting the universality of Law against the Indeterminists, who maintain a real agency absolved from it, still the fact of Law being universal is no argument against freedom in immanent volitions, any more than it is an argument against freedom in overt actions, that is, in men's bodily movements, in everyday experience. All real agents and all real actions are subject to laws of nature, and cannot exist or be performed without being so. We shall come presently to the positive grounds for asserting real freedom in volitions. Here it is only necessary to ask, what the origin

can be for this striking confusion of ideas on the part of Compulsory Determinists. It is apparently as follows. Owing probably to some remnant of theological tradition, they confuse laws of nature with civil laws, or commands enforced by human superiors, and attribute to the former a constraining and compelling power, which belongs only to the latter. But in fact, Laws of Nature are compendious conceptions, or short-hand expressions, as in human language, of facts of nature which are found to be general or uniform, either in their intrinsic character, or in the order of their collocation, or of their occurrence. The objects thought of by these conceptions or laws exist solely in the facts, and as features in them, namely, their observable uniformities. If we speak of Laws as having a separate existence, we must speak of them rather as made by, than imposed upon, or governing, the facts, in which, as uniformities, they are observable. Unlike Civil Laws, they *cannot* be broken or disobeyed; for any facts which broke or disobeyed them would *ipso facto* alter the very laws which, by a metaphor, they are said to break. If freedom in volition is a real fact, it is itself an instance exemplifying laws of nature. In this it would be analogous to the great law or general fact of Variation, in all repetitions of physical actions, and in the physical products of such actions, a law only second, in point of generality, to the law of uniformity, of which in fact it is a case. The fact of freedom in volition, as such an exemplification, is the thing to be proved or disproved, not the fact that laws of nature are universal and uniform. The simple truth is, that, of those who

assert freedom in volition, none but Indeterminists understand thereby freedom or exemption from natural law. The fallacy of Compulsory Determinism, which springs from this confusion of ideas, consists in attributing a compelling power to Laws of Nature, as if they were either irresistible Forces of Nature, or Statutes in a Statute-book, enforced by a sovereign power, only with the *differentia* of being valid for all Time and Space.

This fatal confusion is greatly aided, even if it be not in some cases originated, by introducing the ambiguous word *Necessity* into the question, and opposing it to Liberty, without carefully distinguishing between the two meanings which the word conveys. It means, first, a necessity of thought; whatever we cannot but perceive or think. In Nature there is no necessity in this sense; there is only real *de facto* existence; necessity is a thought of ours, the objective correlate of which, *i.e.*, the real object thought of by it, is Universality, exemplified first in the Universe of Being, and then in any department of the Universe which from time to time we may have before us. In this sense of *necessity*, therefore, every known fact is necessary in its own place and circumstances, so far as these are truly known; and free-will itself, if known to be a fact, would be a necessity, or necessary fact, in the world, of which it was a known feature. Secondly, the word *necessity* means compelling power, a physical force or energy too strong to be successfully resisted. In this sense, motives of conscious action, when resting on physical brain processes, may be irresistible by counter motives, and thus act as compelling forces, necessitating or

rendering compulsory the actions resulting from them. Laws of Nature, when truly known, are necessary in the first sense, as having taken their place among thoughts which we cannot avoid accepting. Some conscious actions, but by no means all, are necessary because necessitated in the second sense. The motives which compel them, and indeed all motives, to the extent of the energy which they exert, seem to inaccurate reasoners to have an efficiency undistinguishable from the uniformity of the laws of nature which are exemplified by their action, and thus, favoured by the ambiguous term *necessity*, contribute to invest the Laws of Nature universally, in their eyes, with compulsory power.

Now among the motives which have compulsory power over actions are those which have been adopted by choice, and have thereby proved themselves the strongest of the motives in conflict at the moment of choice. Onwards from that moment of choice, in which they are adopted by volition, they exercise, for a time, a compelling power over the course of action. But what of their state, and degree of strength, before and up to the moment of choice, and during the period, long or short, of the deliberation which precedes it? Compulsory Determinists are apt, I think, to read back into the motives, as they were before and during the period of deliberation, the degree of strength which they possess after the moment of choice or decision which ends it, and imagine the motive which is proved to be strongest by the fact of its being chosen, and which governs the action dictated by the choice, to have been the strongest

from the beginning of the deliberation, and to have governed the deliberation or process of choosing, as it subsequently governs the action chosen.

But a close consideration of the phenomena seems rather to point the other way, and warrant an opposite conclusion, namely, that the victorious motive owes its superior strength at the moment of choice to the action or process of deliberation which terminates in choice, at least as much as to its own initial degree of strength, compared to the initial degrees of strength of the other motives, with which it is said to have been in conflict. The kernel of the problem of Free-will lies in the question thus opened, after divesting it of the logomachies built up round it by the various confusions of thought which have just been noticed. These confusions attach to the conception and reality of freedom, that is, of free or self-determined actions generally; we have now to do with those which attach to the conception and reality of the specifically distinct and complex action called volition, complex in the sense that it includes certain modes of consciousness, by which the action as a whole is described, as well as the physiological action, upon which those modes of consciousness proximately depend, to which the freedom of the action as a whole belongs, and on account of which the name *free-will* is given to it. Thus volition, as a complex, conscious, and self-determined action, now becomes our immediate object of enquiry, as freedom has been hitherto.

Here, then, it is, that we enter upon the second part of our examination, which must finally decide for us the question of the reality of free-will, an

examination into the mechanism of deliberation ending in choice; deliberation and choice being those modes of consciousness, by which volition as a whole is known and characterised. What, then, is it to deliberate and choose? What are the essential characteristics of actions of this kind? I say of deliberation and choice, or of deliberation ending in choice, because choice involves deliberation, however brief or cursory it may be, and is impossible without it. Choice plainly involves the perception of different contents represented as alternatives, and this representation as plainly involves some comparison of them in respect of value. Thus, in immanent volitions, alternatives are objective thoughts, belonging to the conscious half of the whole complex process which ends with the incorporation of one of them into the system of the Subject's consciousness, by means of the exclusive retention and continuation of that brain process which supported it as an objective thought, during the process of representation.

In thus drawing out the action of volition into its two parts, deliberation and choice, we are, as it were, magnifying it under the microscope of analysis, the first application of which yields this distinction. Two further steps remain to be taken, the first being a somewhat more minute analysis of acts of deliberation ending in choice, and the second a separation or contradistinction of those acts from others which are liable to be confused with them. I begin with the first step, and with the first division of it, that is, with deliberative action.

Deliberation with a view to choice, prior to the act of choice which terminates it, plainly involves

(1) a consciousness of incompatible or alternative desires, (2) a comparison of them in respect of their degrees of desirability, and (3) this comparison involves, as such, a volition to compare them. The question is, what is the nature of that volition which supports comparison, as distinguished from the total volition to be analysed, I mean from that choice between alternative desires, into which comparison enters as a factor? This question is necessary, since, unless we distinguish these two modes of volition, we seem to revolve in a vicious circle, volition being impossible without comparison, and yet comparison being impossible without volition. Now it is plain, I think, that the volition supporting comparison, taken alone, is a volition to know as distinguished from a volition to choose or act. It arises from a desire of one special kind, the desire of knowing; but this desire does not become a volition to compare desires, that is, to deliberate with a view to choose, until it is perceived to be in contrast with other desires, of any or every kind, that is with the unthinking indulgence of them. In its ultimate origin, comparison is a process directed to know something, and deliberation, as far as it involves comparison, is a process of thinking. But it is not with deliberation solely as a process of thinking that we are now concerned, but as a process of thinking with a view to choice, or as a constituent part of practical, not speculative, action. Whence is its practical character derived? The answer is plain; it is from the nature of the contents compared by it, namely, desires; not from the act of comparison taken alone. Deliberation, therefore, as the comparison of desires with a view

to choice, may indeed be said to have its immediate, as distinguished from its ulterior, purpose in knowledge; but this is not the purpose which characterises it as practical deliberation. Its ulterior and characterising purpose lies in the action which it helps to determine; and this character is derived from the fact, that it is a comparison of desires, which are motives of action.

Next as to the second division of the first step, the act of choice which terminates the deliberation. This is indistinguishable, in point of nature, from acts of selective attention in perception and thought, such as enter into the deliberative process, with which I may assume that we are already familiar. Its distinctive character as an act of choice consists in its standing as the outcome and termination of a deliberative process, the End at which the prior volition, above spoken of, aimed. It is immediately known by two features only, one of which gives it the character of an *act*, the other the character of an act of *choice*. The first of these consists in the sense of effort or tension, which may be great or small according as the alternative desire adopted is more or less distinctly felt either as disagreeable, or as difficult of retention or execution, in comparison with the desires which are rejected on the ground of their being less desirable on the whole. I need not stay here to prove what has been abundantly proved by others, Professor W. James and Professor Münsterberg for instance, that this element in conscious choice, namely, the sense of effort accompanying the experience of it, is not an immediate concomitant of any efferent innervation, and therefore cannot be said to be a

sense or perception of neural or cerebral activity. At the same time, the distinction between action and activity on the one hand and feeling, perception, and thought, on the other, so far as it is an immediately perceived distinction within consciousness, seems to be given ultimately by the sense of effort only, which thus becomes the *differentia* of conscious action, the mark by which we distinguish in conscious processes their apparent character of activity or conation, from their character of feeling, and from their character of cognition.

The other feature in acts of choice, that to which their selective character is due, consists in a decisive change in our perception of the relative desirabilities of the alternative desires represented in the deliberation, including the retention and intensifying of one, the weakening or disappearance of the others. This also is immediately known only as a consciousness, not of the cerebral re-action or discharge, acting either by way of stimulation or by way of inhibition, upon which it immediately depends, but of a preponderance of desirability (for whatever reason) in, and exclusive occupation of consciousness by, one of the alternatives in consciousness, supported by the cerebral processes which underlie the previous deliberation; of which processes the cerebral re-action or discharge spoken of, which is the real act of choice, is the concluding member. This consciousness is the consciousness of what we call, and call truly, *our* selection of the most desirable alternative and dismissal of the rest; since "we" here means the really acting cerebral organ, the real agent or Subject of

the action, together with its concomitant and dependent consciousness at the time; and otherwise than as so perceived we have no direct knowledge of our Self as an agent, or of our own acts, any more than we have direct knowledge of physical objects and agencies, otherwise than as they are perceived in consciousness. Similarly of the neural discharge, or whatever else may constitute the real act of choice, we are at the time of its taking place wholly unconscious; our knowledge of it is merely inferential. We are conscious only of its effects in consciousness, that is, of the retention and intensifying of the desired alternative, the weakening or vanishing of the others.

Two things result from this analysis. First, in what we call the Identity of the Ego, the identity is really that of the process-content of consciousness, and cannot be anything else, if that identity is immediately perceived, as is commonly and truly supposed. This, in cases of choice, is perceived as an identity between what is anticipated before the moment of choice, namely, that a selection is about to be made between given alternatives, and what is remembered, or more strictly retained in consciousness, after the moment of choice, namely, that a selection has been made between those same alternatives. The sameness of the alternatives, in anticipation and in retention of the intervening moment of choice, yields the experience of the sameness, unity, or continuity, of the whole process-content of consciousness, including the experience of the choice itself. It is only in retrospect that we are originally conscious of this continuous unity; but of course, when we have once become familiar with it

as a constantly recurring feature of experience, our knowledge or awareness of it may be distinctly present, by association, at any moment, whether of retrospect or of anticipation; that is to say, self-consciousness may then accompany any conscious process. The consciousness of our own action is therefore no exception to the universal law of all human consciousness, namely, that it is reflective; we perceive the results of the real neural action from the moment of their rising above the threshold of consciousness and beginning to recede into the past of memory.—The second point to notice is, that, in what we call the Activity of the Ego in choice, the activity is neither an activity in the supposed Ego, nor immediately perceived as an activity at all. The sense of effort, which is an immediately perceived ingredient in our experience of choosing, is the sole ultimate ground for our distinguishing some process-contents of consciousness as activities, and this neither tells us what an activity *per se* is, nor that it is inherent in an Ego, or in consciousness.

In these two points, taken in combination with neuro-cerebral processes, we have, as I contend, the true (though far from complete) psychological explanation of those phenomena which we call, in common-sense language, our own conscious actions. The psychological explanation of all phenomena, as they are apprehended by common sense, consists in turning them, by analysis, into neural processes together with their concomitant and dependent process-contents of consciousness; both elements of the explanation being of a verifiable nature, and together constituting a different mode of representing

the phenomena which they are required to account for. This alone is true psychological analysis. Contrast this with the pretended explanation afforded by inventing an abstract or transcendental Mind or Ego, a shadow-man as I have called it above, and referring the phenomena to its agency, without any change in the common-sense mode of apprehending them. This is nothing but the *explicanda* repeated, *plus* an unverifiable hypothesis. It is a case of writing psychology up to the terms of the common-sense vocabulary of a language, as if every such term had of necessity a single reality corresponding to it. Psychology of this kind is a costly superfluity.

Contrast it again with the futile tautologies derived from surrendering the activity of the supposed Mind or Ego, and attributing activity to consciousness alone. On this assumption (to which grammatical forms of language lend a ready support) sensations feel, perceptions perceive, desires desire, volitions will, judgments judge, thought thinks, consciousness is conscious, and so on;—each mode or function of consciousness producing its own content in and by its own process, and the interaction of all constituting them, taken together, a Mind or Ego.[5] Here also the common-sense vocabulary is written up to, and here also the common-sense conception of a conscious being is repeated in an attenuated form, not analytically resolved into factors which are demonstrably present, but are undistinguished in the common-sense conception.

[5] That *thought thinks*, and that other modes of consciousness can be exhibited as modes of thought, was the notable idea with which Hegel for many years dazzled the eyes of a bewildered Germany.

The only difference is, that here the supposed Mind or Ego is taken as resulting from functions at the end of a process, instead of conditioning functions at the beginning of one; that is to say, the difference lies only in our way of considering the phenomena, not in the phenomena considered. Not a ray of explanatory light is cast upon the nature of any of the functions so treated, or of the whole which they are said to compose.

I now pass to the second of the two steps of the enquiry above spoken of. The actions from which acts of deliberation ending in choice are contradistinguished by the characteristics mentioned, but which are liable to be confused with them, owing to their common characteristics of consciousness and desire, are actions in which no alternative desires are contemplated, still less compared with a view to adopt that which shall appear the most desirable. They are actions in which some one desire is adopted, or more strictly, yielded to or indulged, as soon as it arises in consciousness, thus preventing alternative desires from rising above the threshold, and excluding all possibility of deliberation. Re-actions of this kind, though accompanied by consciousness, are not volitions in the strict sense, but fall under the description, due, I believe, to the late Dr. W. B. Carpenter, of consensual reflex actions. They are not volitions, since they include no choice between alternatives, and so are not consciously selective, while all true volition is choice. They are cases of action determined by a single unresisted motive, evidenced by a desire. There is no trace of free-will here. The motive and the action determined by it may be free,

inasmuch as they may be unhindered by impediments extraneous to themselves; but that is not the question. The will is not concerned in them at all. They may be cases of free action, or more strictly, perhaps, of reflex process, but they are not cases of free volition.

We must, however, be careful to distinguish, from these wholly undeliberative actions, those in which there is a moment of deliberation, though it may be excessively brief. It is these which throw the most light on the nature and function of volition, from the very closeness in which they stand to non-volitional action; thus enabling us to define the limits of what may be called figuratively the "inner man," by the union of selective re-action with self-consciousness, without having recourse to the hypothesis of an abstract or transcendental Ego. I have in view cases in which we are aware that the one desire, which seems to take immediate possession of consciousness, is opposed by other desires, which we do not choose to entertain, but immediately on their existence being suggested reject and put aside, by directing attention to the one presented. These are plainly cases of volition and choice, since we are conscious of there being alternatives, and distinctly choose to avoid considering them. We adopt, almost instantaneously, by an act of choice, the single desire which has positively presented itself to consciousness.

Under actions of this class there are two cases, broadly distinguished from each other. One is where the desire, almost instantaneously adopted, is adopted because the choosing power, or will, is weak, the other because it is strong, relatively to

the desire. In the first case, the almost instantaneous decision is arrived at owing to the overmastering strength of the desire adopted, compared to the motive power in the tendency to deliberate, before adopting a desire. The reality of such cases will be readily admitted. Desires having their source in deeply seated instinctive tendencies, and so belonging to some natural appetite or passion, furnish the most obvious instances. In yielding we know what we are doing, we hesitate a moment, then throw counter considerations to the winds, and in so doing consent to the desire, and will it to take effect. Conscious consent, implying a knowledge of alternatives, makes the desire consented to a volition; but though a volition, the strength which it possesses is hardly at all due to the consent, almost entirely due to the desire. In the second case, its being arrived at is owing to frequent previous deliberations concerning similar desires, and frequent acts of choice in accordance with their results, which have rendered deliberation in any later instance of the same kind unnecessary. The reality of cases of this kind also is familiar and unquestionable. In actions falling under the first head, the will as a deliberating agency is mastered by a powerful motive; in those falling under the second, the motive which it follows receives its strength from the will itself, in the same deliberative character. Still, in both cases there is deliberation, and, as will be seen presently, to the extent of the deliberation there is freedom.

In these cases, in which deliberation is at a minimum, but which no one will deny to be conscious volitional actions, we must, I think,

recognise a corroboration of the justice of the analysis of volition into deliberation and choice, which was given above. Volition is thus a complex action, and the mechanism of brain processes, on which it depends, must be complex also. But since volition, though complex, is indivisible, as we have also seen; that is to say, is a single action, the constituents of which cannot be separated without destroying its volitional character; we must infer, that the brain processes also, on which it depends, act together normally as an organic whole, in whatever way they may be combined in the brain structure, and in however many places of the brain structure the same combination of processes (same in point of kind) may be repeated. It follows, that another essential characteristic of volition is, that the agent who deliberates is the agent who chooses, since the parts of the mechanism, subserving the volition, form together an organic whole, which is the real agent of the total action. In other words, it is essentially characteristic of volition to be self-determination, or rather, more precisely, the self-determination of a self-determining agent.

We have moreover just seen, that the power of deliberation ending in choice, which is volition, may be, on the one hand, weakened by some particular overmastering motive, down to the point at which it ceases to be volition by the disappearance of deliberation altogether, or on the other hand strengthened by the habit of deliberating and choosing, up to the point at which, again in the case of particular motives, it likewise ceases to be volition, by a similar disappearance of deliberation from its action. Volition, therefore, holds a middle

position between these two extremes, being an action retaining its volitional character only so long as it contains a certain minimum of deliberation and consequent choice among its actual features or constituents. The results for the individual Subject, in point of general volitional power and strength of character, are of course widely different, stand indeed in the most trenchantly marked contrast, in the two cases. But both cases alike show, that action which was once volitional may lose its volitional character, and become a fixed and indurated mode of action, which is habitually and spontaneously repeated, on every occurrence of the appropriate stimuli.

The great difference between these two modes, in which volitional action may become habitual and spontaneous, lies in this, that the former is owing to the action of motives or desires originally extraneous to volition, the latter to the action of volition itself. The first alone has interest for us in the Free-will question, since it alone exhibits volition as fettered or impeded in its action by a motive or desire which it has not sufficient power to resist. That such cases occur is undeniable. And even where the force of some overmastering desire does not go to the length of destroying the power of deliberation altogether, still, to whatever degree it obtains the mastery, and weakens the power of deliberation, to that extent it fetters the action of volition and impairs its character as an agency which is consciously self-determining. But it is also clear, that this impeding and weakening action of desires, which we call their action upon volition, is always action belonging

to the volition which is impeded and weakened; since volition arises only in and by the entry of desires into the process of deliberation, which is the first of the two acts of which volition consists. Whatever action, therefore, desires exert upon volition is action exerted upon it from within, not from without. Desires must first be taken up into volition by deliberation, before they can act upon the volition into which they are taken up.

We can now see the answer to another form of the question of Free-will, which also goes to the root of the whole matter,—Where and how are we to draw the line between volition itself and desires or motives which are extraneous to it, and fetter its action from without? The answer is supplied by what has been already said concerning the essential characteristics of volition. A desire or motive wholly undeliberated upon is extraneous to volitional action, but deliberating upon it incorporates it therewith; and it may be added, that the act of choice which terminates the deliberation incorporates the desire or motive adopted with the nature and habits of the agent. It is thus through deliberation that what is originally extraneous and prevolitional becomes part and parcel of volition, by having its operation delayed until it has been brought into competition with other desires or motives, and modified by the already existing habits and powers of the cerebral organs concerned in deliberating; so that the result, which is the act of choice, is the result of this deliberative competition and modification, and not of any single desire or motive which enters into it, taken alone. Volition is thus partly constituted by desires; they are

essential factors in it; deliberation means desires being deliberated on. Hence the absurdity of empirically opposing the Will to desires, as if an empirical separation was an ultimate analytic truth. The Will cannot be so opposed to desires without hypostasising the Will as a separate entity, which is done when we thoughtlessly imagine it as a faculty of choosing, deciding, acting, creating, or commanding.

The physical brain process or action, which supports a concomitant conscious process of deliberation and choice, is, taken alone, a process of organic and living mechanism, not teleological, that is, not guided by conscious purpose, since it has no perception of itself as a physical brain process. But inasmuch as the consciousness which it supports includes anticipation, comparison, judgment, and purpose, the action taken as a whole (physical process and conscious process together) has a teleologic or purposive character. And thus it is, both that in volition the living mechanism of action ceases to be a "blind" mechanism, and also that in volition we have the first origination of the idea of design and teleology.

We know our own character by means of the consciousness which accompanies and depends upon the physical brain process supporting volition, and whenever we think of ourselves as concrete agents, including both processes, we think of ourselves as acting for anticipated Ends, that is, by design or purpose. So far we think truly; but at the same time it is true, that the design or anticipated End, taken in abstraction from the physical half of the process, or as if it belonged to the

conscious half only, is no real link in the train of our action, and has no real efficiency in producing its results. Final Causes, as they are called, are no real conditions in determining action.

In the present state of physiology we have no adequate means of distinguishing and describing the minuter cerebral organs, systems, and processes concerned in the concrete process spoken of, but are driven to describe them solely by the several steps and parts of the conscious half of the whole concrete process. But we know enough to be aware, that this is no argument against either the reality or the indispensability of the physical half of the process, as the proximate real condition of the other half. Described in terms of consciousness, deliberation means representing and comparing different and antagonistic desires with a view to ascertain their relative degrees of desirability. It may be a long or a short process in different cases, and may include recalling into memory, or summoning into imagination, the most remote consequences and connections of the desires compared, as well as the consideration of parallel or analogous cases, or instructive examples, and possibly also the evocation of other desires and aims besides those originally in debate, to serve either as their allies or their substitutes. But whether the process be long or short, simple or complex, the effect of deliberating on the question at all is inevitably that of making the whole content of the process of deliberation part and parcel of the content of the volition, in which the deliberation is included, so that every step and turn in the deliberation contributes to give to the final act of choice its special

and differentiating character. Desires or motives which make no part of deliberation continue, as originally they are, extraneous to volition. But they cease to be extraneous to it, the moment they become objects of deliberation, with a view to choosing between them. The importance of these results for Ethic consists in the evidence they afford, that there is a class of actions, namely, volitions, or deliberations ending in choice, which cannot be dissociated from any positive idea which we can form of our Self as a real being or agent. For just as water does not cease to be water because it can be theoretically analysed into oxygen and hydrogen, so the real and active Self does not cease to be a real and active Self because it can be theoretically analysed into brain and consciousness. But on these points it is not here the place to enlarge.

This, then, being the nature of Volition, we are brought face to face with our final question,—Is Volition free, and in what sense? Or in another shape,—Is Free-will a reality? Now these are questions which, after the foregoing analysis, almost answer themselves. Since volition is deliberation and choice in a real agent, its Freedom must consist (according to Hobbes' definition) in the absence of all impediments to deliberating and choosing, which are not contained in the natural and intrinsic quality of the agent. And since it is clear that as real agents we do deliberate and choose, the freedom to do so must be commensurate with, and inseparable from, the act of so doing, that is the act of volition, whenever it takes place. Will means and implies Free-will; and unless free has no existence. Volition and Freedom of volition begin and end to-

gether. Freedom in willing is merely the power to will. It is not maintained that Volition is the only instance of free action; nor that we always possess the power to will. It is maintained that we possess it in innumerable cases, and that, wherever we possess it, freedom is its inseparable characteristic.

Consider it also in another way. Volition is completed in the act of choosing, that is, of adopting, or giving exclusive attention to, one out of several represented alternative desires, an adoption which is still future, still to be made, during the period of deliberation, and up to the moment of choice. This element of futurity, and consequently of uncertainty as to the issue, in our consciousness of the action, is that which makes us feel the action as free; just as the sense of effort in actions is that which makes us feel them as actions in contradistinction from events. True, this sense of freedom is admittedly no evidence for real freedom in the volitions which it accompanies. At the same time we may fairly approach the phenomena from the side of this feeling, and on doing so we find, that the sense of freedom which accompanies volitions depends upon a circumstance which is essential to our conception of them as really free, namely, that they are really free only while they are in process of being performed, and have their issue still future. The futurity of the issue is essential to real freedom in the present; uncertainty as to that issue is essential to the sense of freedom. In volitions, then, it is not the action as completed, but the action in process towards completion, that we not only feel as free, but think of as really being so.

In other words, up to the moment of completion, which is the moment of choice, that is, during deliberation, comparison, and weighing of alternative motives or desires, the volition is not an act of choice, but an energy of choosing in course of operation. That energy actually operating in the volition, when unimpeded by anything not included in the volition, is what is free in it; its freedom is shown by the fact, that it exists as the determination of a self-determining agent. Consequently, what volition is, that its freedom is, save only for the difference in the observer's point of view, free dom being taken as the absence of external hindrance to doing what volition does. Free-will, therefore, is the power of self-determination possessed by an agent in his conscious acts of choice, volition being the name for that self-determination in its entirety. Volition is the name for the whole action, the course of which is free, and the completion of which is choice. When we have chosen we are no longer free to choose, but we are free until we have chosen. Those fetters of the will which depend on prior acts of choice are all self-forged.

A word or two more may be permitted on the sense of freedom, and the relation it bears to real freedom in volition. The sense of being free in choosing is a feeling which we experience during deliberation, and up to its termination in actual choice. And the term *sense of freedom* describes our awareness of being engaged in deliberation, and ignorant which alternative we shall select. Now what I would remark is, that until we know what this process in reality is, and in what its process really

consists, we do not and cannot know the meaning of the term *sense of freedom;* for it is plain that freedom is not itself a reality which is its own evidence, as sensations or emotions are, say for instance, light or sound, grief or joy, anger or love, in all of which the feeling and the felt are one in point of content. It was therefore admitted at the outset, that the sense of freedom was not of itself evidence, that freedom, its so-called object, was a reality. But now, by showing that freedom is a reality, it is also shown that the feeling which is said to be the awareness or sense of it is no illusion, but is the perception of a certain feature universally present in volitions as processes of consciousness, namely, the uncertainty of their issue, and therefore, like all other parts of those processes, must have some real condition supporting it in the brain processes, upon which volitions as processes of consciousness depend.

The case is very similar to that of sense of effort, the nature of which was examined in an earlier Chapter, and which also comes forward in acts of choice, as already noticed. Each of these feelings is the perception or awareness of a particular feature in the content of volition as a process of consciousness; neither has a positive object of its own, though each is a feature of volitions as objects of consciousness. Neither the real effort nor the real freedom, in the brain processes which support volition, is the object perceived by what we call sense of effort and sense of freedom. Sense of effort, when it arises in redintegration, is a feature conditioned upon the real difficulty of attending to one out of several alternative contents of con-

sciousness previously experienced. And if Professor Münsterberg's theory, mentioned in a former Chapter, should turn out correct, the feeling so conditioned would be resolvable ultimately, in every case, into a feeling of muscular strain or tension, received through afferent nerve channels. Sense of freedom is much simpler, but still is feeling attending the representation of something which is independently present in consciousness. It is the feeling which attends the representation of our ignorance of the issue of a deliberation which is at present in progress. The actual incompleteness of the brain processes subserving the deliberative process would therefore seem to be that feature in them which proximately conditions the sense of freedom.

With these results in hand, we can now reply briefly but directly to the most formidable of the objections which are commonly urged against the reality of Free-will. The first objection is usually drawn from the fact of the agent being himself a part of Nature, and subject in all his actions to laws of Nature. We are so constituted, it is said, as to feel some motives to be stronger than others, and to choose in accordance with the strongest motive; the choice is therefore not ours, but prescribed for us by our natural constitution which is not our own creation, but is the work of extraneous forces, of which it, and therefore we, are the product.

Or again in other words, we cannot help acting, it is said, according to the nature with which we have been endowed, in conjunction with the circumstances in which from time to time we are placed, neither can we help having been endowed

with that nature; our action is always determined by our nature, and our nature is determined by the pre-existing conditions which have evolved it. Where, then, is there any place for any real choice on our part, that is, on the part of our nature, between alternatives? This objection, be it observed, does not rest on any difference between the "we" and our natural constitution, or fallacious duplication of the Ego, a fallacy which has been already exposed in this Section. The present objection (notwithstanding some ambiguity which it is difficult to eliminate from the language expressing it) is founded on the supposition that "we" and our natural constitution are one.

Now to this objection in the first place, granting the position that our constitution, that is, we ourselves, are wholly and entirely products of Nature, the reply is this. The objection assumes that the action of our natural constitution must be continuous with the natural processes which form it, in such a way as to leave no room for any differentiation of it from them, within the processes of Nature generally; that is to say, for no specific difference in our natural constitution, in virtue of which its action is at once "ours" and a natural action subject to laws of Nature. But this natural constitution of ours has been the object of the foregoing analysis. And that analysis has shown, that we are really constituted, not to be governed by the strongest motive, but to deliberate, that is, to exercise a reciprocal action of part upon part within a deliberating organ or set of organs, so as to give a weight to some motives which would not have been theirs otherwise, and to deprive other

motives of a weight which they would otherwise have possessed; so that a new start is taken by that organ or set of organs, in consequence of this their internal action, and the choice in which this new start consists is *our own* in a new and different sense from any action or conscious turn taken without deliberation.

In virtue of our possessing this organ or set of organs, we are in fact determined (in the compulsory sense), not to choose this desire rather than that, but to deliberate whether this desire or that shall be made or permitted to become the one determining our choice, or the strongest at the final moment of choosing. The compulsion to deliberate consists in the fact, that incompatible desires are offered to us in the course of spontaneous redintegrations, which draw our attention in different directions, and set up the further desire of comparing them in point of preferability. And though it is true, that we are not always compelled to adopt this preliminary desire of comparing desires, yet it is also true, that not to adopt it would be to renounce *pro tanto* the exercise of thought as rational beings. Our natural constitution as rational beings thus compels us to go through a deliberative process in certain cases of choosing between alternatives, and any choice made by going through such a process is what can only be called a free choice, or instance of free-will, because it is an instance of self-determination on the part of the organ which chooses. Deliberation is a fact of primary importance in our natural constitution, and it is also that action in which, owing to the consciousness which accompanies it, we seem to see laws of Nature in actual interaction, or

drawn out as a process, and that a process of self-determination or development. The very fact that our constitution as rational beings is fixed for us by Nature shows, that freedom in volition, being a part of that constitution, is a fact from which we cannot escape, so long as "we" and that constitution are one. Consequently, when the objection is urged, that we cannot help acting in accordance with our nature, in conjunction with the circumstances in which from time to time we are placed, the reply is, that exercising a real choice is, in many cases, the only action in accordance with our nature, of which we are capable. In these cases, what our nature determines us to do is, not simply to choose a particular alternative, but to deliberate and then choose, by giving weight to some alternative in consequence of the deliberation. We are determined, by our nature, to interpose an action of our own between the first perception of alternatives and the final adoption of one of them.—From the cogency of this reply I do not see that escape is possible, except by refusing to admit the commonly accepted definition of free action, namely, self-determination on the part of an agent, of which free-will is a case, a definition quite in accordance with that which I quoted from Hobbes, as an unexceptionable authority in this matter, at the outset of this Section, "Liberty is the absence of all the impediments to action that are not contained in the nature and intrinsical quality of the agent."

Sometimes, however, the objection drawn from the constitution of the agent is so used as to apply to the deliberating process in detail, which it is contended is compulsorily determined at all its

points or stages by the constitution of that part of the agent's mechanism which is immediately engaged in it. We have here precisely the same objection as before, except that it is applied to the ultimate atoms, or atomic acts, so to speak, of the deliberating process. And the answer is again the same, namely, that, supposing each atomic act was compulsorily determined by the atom or atoms of the mechanism immediately engaged in it, this fact would show, not the coercion, but the freedom of the mechanism immediately engaged, and therefore the freedom of the act of which it alone, or the atom or atoms composing it, was the compeller; since every atomic act would then be the immediate consequence of the intrinsic quality of some atom in the mechanism. Unless indeed, as above said, we should have recourse to another definition of freedom than the one commonly accepted, and understand it to mean freedom from laws of Nature. And this conception is, I believe, the tacitly but fondly cherished assumption which prompts most of the objections to the reality of free-will, when honestly entertained.

When we take freedom in volition as attaching to a particular kind of action, namely deliberation, subject to laws of Nature, and enquire whether any agent is free in this the true meaning of the term, we must take the agent as he is at a given moment, the moment when alternatives are brought consciously before him, and then ask *how* his choice is determined;—and if determined *ab intra*, as it is in deliberation, then it is free choice, that is, free volition. To attempt to go behind what the agent is at the moment of entering on the action of

deliberation and choice is to substitute for the analysis of that action, which shows it to be self-determination, the conception, not of an order of real conditioning, but of the single *de facto* order of Nature which results from the play of real conditions, and in which no possibilities and no alternatives, seeing that it is as a result that it is treated, have place. But the question concerning freedom is, not whether the result of action, when it has resulted, is single and immutable, but how that result, whatever it may be, is brought about, or what is the nature of the real conditioning which effects it. The objection, therefore, that free-will is impossible, because it implies the possibility of alternatives, while the course of Nature is single and immutable, is an objection founded on the rejection of analysis, and the substitution of an abstract conception, the applicability of which, after all, there is nothing but analysis to ascertain.

On the commonly accepted definition of freedom, the same choice, the same action, is free (if determined *ab intra*) when considered from the practical point of view, and is a part of the *de facto* process of real conditioning when considered from the point of view of positive as distinguished from practical science. Freedom and real conditioning are neither contradictories, nor mutually exclusive in any way. All actions, all events, which enter into or take place in the actual or *de facto* order of Nature, are determined to do so by some real conditions or other. The question is, *how* determined, or *by what* real conditions? Now by the free action of a free agent is meant an action which is really conditioned, determined, or compelled, by the play

of forces within the agent, or to the extent to which it is exclusively so conditioned. The forces (with their laws), which constitute him a real agent, also, in the case or to the extent supposed, constitute him a free agent. It is therefore no objection to the freedom of an action, that it is part of a really conditioning process. To be an action at all, it must consist of a play of forces subject to laws of Nature. The notion, that the reality of an action is an objection to its freedom, is a notion which can spring only from the vain imagination, that freedom from laws of Nature (an impossible conception) is the freedom intended by those who maintain the reality of freedom in volitions.

A second objection or class of objections to the reality of free-will, though ultimately founded in the same fondly cherished prejudice, is connected with it through the idea, that the issue of every action, choice, or deliberation, is conceivably or in its nature predictable; or as it is sometimes expressed, is known as a fact to Omniscience. On this basis it is argued, that what is known or knowable beforehand, or from eternity, must have been fore-ordained or fated from eternity, that is, actually determined beforehand, by some real and compelling agency, to be produced in its appointed place in and by the order of real conditioning. But here again, if we accept the commonly accepted definition of freedom, and consider those actions to be free which are determined *ab intra* by way of deliberation, the circumstance of their issue being predictable, or even actually known, beforehand in no way affects the character of real freedom which attaches to them. If they are known, their character of free-

dom is known with them, and the compelling agency in them is known to be that of the free agent himself. If every detail of every human action were known before it took place in choice and act, as it might be if the laws of Nature which it exemplifies were similarly known, this would not affect the freedom of those actions in the smallest degree. For if the freedom of an action is not affected by the laws of Nature which it exemplifies, though they are general in form, and therefore expressions of what is future as well as of what is present and past, still less can it be affected by a knowledge of those facts, events, or actions, the uniformities in which are described as laws embracing the future as well as the past and present, and so generalising the uniformities, or as it may be expressed, viewing them *sub quadam specie æternitatis.* I take it to be incontrovertible, that, in the Order of Real Conditioning, Law depends upon Fact, not Fact upon Law. I mean, that Law is not intelligible otherwise than as a feature or character involved in Fact, and cannot be hypostasised as a separate and prior existent. —Objections of this class are merely a roundabout way of urging the objection drawn from the real uniformity of Nature's laws. To say that issues are known or knowable is only an indirect way of bringing home to us the fact, that one of their alternatives will make part of the *de facto* single and immutable order of Nature, which we have already seen is no objection to the freedom of choosing between them. Neither ignorance nor fore-knowledge of the choice which will actually be made can affect the nature of the action

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of choosing, or of the mode in which choice is made, as a real action belonging to the Course of Nature. Nevertheless, the objection stated in this particular way has a special cogency for many minds, particularly for those habituated to theological modes of thought, to which the idea of a blind Destiny or Fate belongs, equally with that of a creative and overruling Providence; for which reason it has seemed to claim a separate reply.

But though we have thus been led into the consideration of such purely philosophical topics as those of Fate, Providence, and Omniscience, it must not be supposed that any solution can there be found for what ought to be treated, not as a question belonging to the constructive branch of philosophy, but simply as a psychological question, the reality or non-reality of Free-will. The key, not to the solution, but rather to the insolubility of the problems

> "Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate—
>
> "Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute—"

when treated as purely philosophical problems, is to be found in the consideration of the three Modal Categories or Concepts, and their relation to each other. I mean, of course, the conceptions of *Actuality*, *Possibility*, *Necessity*, with their three corresponding objective aspects, Simple *de facto* Existence, Contingence, Universality.[6] For these

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[6] See above (in Vol. III.) Book III. Chap. IV. § 6. Also *Philosophy of Reflection*, (Vol. I.), Book II. Chap. V. § 10, *The Reflective Categories or Modals*; and Chap. VI. § 5, *Final Determination of the Modal Categories*; and § 6, *Logical Possibility*.

concepts apply without distinction to everything whatever, to the Unseen and Seen Worlds alike, and to the connection between them; and for this reason it is, that any questions which are treated as capable of determination by them alone are *ipso facto* treated as belonging to the purely speculative and constructive branch of philosophy.

Now we cannot avoid applying these concepts, since they are part and parcel of the very mechanism of thought. We can and must apply each of the modal concepts in turn to the Universe of Things, in attempting, as we cannot but attempt, to conceive its nature as a whole. But under none of them can we arrive at an absolute conclusion with regard to that nature. In thinking of anything whatever, we must, by virtue of the fundamental action of all thought, of which the Postulates of Logic are the expression, begin by supposing alternatives as alike provisionally possible. A simple percept objectified in thought is thereby thought of as possible not to exist as it is now perceived to exist. This gives us at once the Second Modal Concept, and it plainly admits of our drawing no absolute conclusion as to the nature of the Universe, since taken alone it precludes all positive knowledge of it whatever. From this we go on to ask, what reason there is for any given percept existing as it does, rather than not. We are thereby landed in the Third Modal Concept, that of necessity, to which universality in objective existence corresponds. But here again we are baffled. There is no reason, no real condition, thinkable, which does not require some other reason, some other real condition, which

shall render its existence necessary. We are therefore driven back to our first position, that in which we had a simple objectified percept before us, and now conceive the Universe under the First Modal Concept, as that which actually exists after the manner of a simple objectified percept,—a vast Existent stretching from infinity to infinity, and from eternity to eternity,—but without containing any alternatives, or any possibility of being other than it is, and also (for the same reason) without containing any necessity, reason, or real condition, for existing as we conceive it to exist. To say that such an Universe is self-existent is merely to confess that we do not know how or why it exists, that its nature and manner of being transcend our powers of thought. For to call it the real condition of its own existence, as we do in calling it self-existent, is a contradiction in terms, is to conceive it existing prior to existing. No reason for its simple *de facto* existence can be given. It is nothing but the First Modal Concept hypostasised. And yet this existence is eternal and all-embracing, though excluding, by its definition, all necessities as well as all possibilities.

But is this an insight into the nature of the Universe, does it answer any questions whatever concerning it? Just the reverse. It is the denial that any questions are logically possible. No necessities or reasons for the existent, no possibilities or alternatives other than the existent, are admitted. To human intelligence, to all the questions that finite human beings can put, the conception of an infinite and eternal *de facto* existence opposes an inscrutable blank, an impenetrable

silence. We put the question of the possibility of alternatives in conduct, the reality of freedom,—we are answered by the simply *de facto*. We put the question of *why* or *how comes*,—the answer is the same; *everything* is real, *everything* is unconditioned; and human intelligence is deprived of the power of drawing any valid inference, or entertaining any reasonable expectation, concerning anything which is not immediately present in perception. Yet for all that, the necessity for thinking, if at all, by the mechanism of alternative possibilities, and reasons for and against any given conception, that is, for thinking under the Second and Third Modal Concepts, forces us to think of a simply *de facto* Universe, just as we think of a single given percept simply objectified. Thus we

"find no end, in wandering mazes lost."

And the reason why the question of Free-will, when treated as a purely philosophical question, is insoluble, is this, that being then treated as a question concerning the Universe at large, a question involving the relation of the Seen to the Unseen World, its solution is falsely expected to result from some manipulation of the Modal Concepts.

The only way of profitably treating the question of Free-will, so far as I can see, is that which I have taken in the present Section; that is to say, treating it as a psychological question, the reality or non-reality of a power of choice exercised by finite human Subjects. It is thereby made a question of positive science, and the reality or non-reality of freedom in choosing brought under what, in one of the passages cited above (*Philosophy of Reflection*, Book II., Chap VI., § 5.), I pointed out as the final

form of the Modal Concept of *Possibility*, namely, that of the *Conditionally-necessary*, which is the general or guiding conception, under which alone any positive investigation of experientially given facts can logically be carried on. Of course, in so doing, we are adopting the doctrine of simple Determinism, as above explained and distinguished from what I have called Compulsory Determinism, which latter is left provisionally an open question. The uniformity of Nature and the Laws of Nature is a general fact, without pre-supposing which all prosecution of connected enquiry would be impossible. And this brings us back to the ground of simple facts, and to questions which must be decided, if at all, by reasons which are ultimately drawn from the analysis of actual experience.

I proceed, then, to examine the third and last of the objections to which I propose to advert, an objection which is drawn, not from the conception of law, but from that of force in Nature. The play of physical and physiological forces in Nature, it is said, is inexorable; that is, not uniform only but irresistible in its action, and all-embracing in its scope, and therefore admits no interference from action of any other kind, that is, of a kind not subject to the compulsion which those forces exercise one upon another. Here again we shall reap the advantage of having adopted the hypothesis, that physical nerve substance, and not some imaginary immaterial entity, is the real agent in consciousness; for it enables us to meet the present objectors on their own ground. The objection tacitly assumes, that free action, if it exists, is not physical, but is action of some other kind interfering with it. The

idea that free action may be a particular kind or mode of physical action, or that physical action may be free, is foreign to their thought. This however is the very thesis which has been maintained in the present Section, and this is the conclusion at which we arrive, when we begin, as in all positive science we must begin, with an analysis of the nature of Matter, instead of beginning with hypotheses as to the unseen conditions of its genesis, or the preconceived laws to which it may have been created to conform. For then we find that Matter in all its parts possesses an initiative, or is an initiator, of action, by virtue of its nature alone, which is the ultimate foundation of all the positive knowledge we can have of it.

Physical force, we know, is found everywhere inherent in and exerted by physical matter, and there is no portion of matter, however small, but exerts force in presence of other portions. This inherent force (Newton's *vis insita*) is the basis upon which the freedom of physical force and physical agents, appearing in certain combinations, ultimately rests; for it is the ultimate and inalienable source of activity in every portion of matter. Now if the reciprocal action of the parts of any material system *inter se* is such as to give rise to a resultant action of the system as a whole on one or more of its parts, and then on an adjacent portion or portions of matter, as in the case of those cerebral actions in which a choice is made between alternative representations, a choice often evidenced by the fact of the representation chosen being carried into effect by means of efferent nerve action, then that internal reciprocal action is free, being a self-determination on

the part of the material system which gives rise to the resultant. It is free because determined *ab intra*, not imposed *ab extra*. Yet it is a physical action subject to laws of Nature. The forces of Nature, as we have seen, are not coerced by the laws of Nature; neither, in the case supposed, are they coerced by forces exerted by other portions of matter. That is, they are not coerced at all, but are free in the only intelligible sense which can be put upon that word, and which is the sense commonly accepted. No portion of matter can be robbed of its inherent force, which in exertion is its activity, and which, in a system of interacting parts conspiring to a resultant activity, is an element in the free or self-determined action of the system.

To show that the action of such a system of interacting parts was not self-determined, nothing less would suffice than this, namely, to bring proof that force and matter can exist apart, and abstract matter be acted on *ab extra* by abstract force. But this, I apprehend, is an idea not positively conceivable. Force in the abstract, apart from matter, is a non-entity; and similarly matter apart from force. Force is the object of a concept, or general term, having logical extension, in which sense it means all the particular forces inherent in or exerted by particular portions of matter, or by the whole of it. Yet the very persons who are most forward to insist on this doctrine in the logical sphere, namely, that there is no single reality answering to a single universal, but that the reality answering to it exists only in the particulars to which it is applicable, these very persons are usually found the most ardent supporters of a

compulsory determinism, and opponents of freedom in volitional action; that is, upholders of a view which can only be maintained by attributing compulsory power to abstract force, whether it be called *force* or *law*, which according to their own doctrine must, in the sphere of efficient reality, be a non-entity and a fiction. If force exists only in particular portions of matter, and if a system of such portions can combine in a resultant action, then the freedom of action of any such combination taken as a whole, both in its internal re-action on its own parts severally, and in its action upon external bodies (though not in the subsequent course of the latter action) is a logical necessity. And no other freedom than this is required as the sufficient basis for the reality of free-will, and consequently of moral responsibility, in Ethic.

The ingenious use often made, as noticed above, by opponents of free-will, of the idea of an immaterial Self or Ego, not unfrequently appears as a pendant to this third objection. That use consists in first setting up the Ego as the real agent (if any) in free-will, and then knocking it down again by showing that its choice is always determined by motive agencies acting under uniform laws; whereby the Ego is reduced to a mere passivity, and all its supposed actions and volitions are exhibited as due to the compulsion of motive agencies exercised upon it. The ingenuity of this consists in acquiring, by the fictitious assumption of the Ego, the idea of something upon which the compelling power inherent in real forces of Nature may be imagined to operate, and therefore with which those forces may be contrasted, as the only

agencies really operative in human conduct. Its value as an argument against free-will disappears with the fictitious assumption of the Ego as the agent in free-will.

One more remark I would make, before quitting the subject. It is, that the kind or quality of the desires or motives, adopted or rejected in deliberation and choice, is wholly irrelevant to the question of freedom. For this question concerns, not what we choose, but whether we choose at all, in any real sense of the word. Yet no doctrine is more common, especially among nominal upholders of free-will, than to represent true freedom of the will as consisting in a man's following his best impulses, obeying the dictates of his conscience, or going on to attain ever higher degrees of moral excellence, self-perfection, or self-realisation. A great confusion of thought is here involved. Goodness of will is not the same thing as freedom of will. Its freedom is the condition of its goodness and badness alike. A power to choose only the good is a contradiction in terms; and were such a power (*per impossibile*) to be attained, it would be at once the highest perfection of the agent's character and the *euthanasia* of his Free-will. Its End would have been attained. The will would then no longer choose at all; it would have done with choosing; and the brain mechanism would thenceforward work spontaneously and habitually, no longer volitionally. The will in its new shape would indeed be free;—but free from what? From the influence of evil desires and motives, not from impediments to its power of choosing between bad motives and good ones, since

its power of choosing bad motives would then be gone.

It will perhaps be said, that every advance made by the will in moral perfection opens a further vista of alternatives, no longer, perhaps, between the bad and the good, but between the good and the better; and that the absolute best lies at an unattainable, and in fact infinite distance. The more the power of choosing is strengthened, the more new alternatives will arise for choice. And this is perfectly true. But it does not touch the question as to what the essentials of free choice are. These are the same, whatever be the quality of the alternatives between which we have to choose, whatever the degree of moral perfection which we may have reached in our onward progress. It is as the basis of moral action, the ground in actual fact of moral responsibility for our actions, that it concerns us to establish the reality of Free-will, the reality of the power to choose between alternative desires or motives. The results which may be reached by a consistent course of choosing rightly are another matter, and so also, it must be added, are the results which will follow from pursuing an opposite line of choice. The will may be strengthened in pursuit of evil, as well as in pursuit of good. The results of either course are equally certain, the character of the individual Subject equally dependent upon the course of action which he chooses to pursue. It is in deciding upon the particular course to be pursued that the question of Free-will has its connection with the question of Conscience. But the question of what we ought to choose is not the question whether we can choose

at all. Unless the power of choosing is first established as a reality, the question, what kinds of choice are best, is left unconnected with the character of any real and self-determining agent.

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§ 6. Empiricism in Ethic necessarily manifests itself in some form of Eudæmonism or Prudentialism; for theories of this kind are neither more nor less than systematisations of Practice built on certain crude assumptions of common sense, namely, first, that every man has an original right to satisfy his desires, and secondly, that right conscious action is that, and that only, which is best adapted to secure their satisfaction. The world into which we are introduced by these assumptions is the common-sense world of Persons and Things; in which perpetual collision, on the one hand with the forces of Nature, and on the other with the conflicting claims and actions of other persons, is our only instructor and guide in modifying the desires which we seek to satisfy, and in devising means whereby the modified claims of all persons alike may be satisfied with the least discomfort; which may be euphemistically called laying foundations for the future progress and better organisation of human society. Ethic on this view becomes a particular mode or kind of Politic.

The analytical method of enquiry leads, as we have seen, to a very different conception of the nature of Ethic, though one which is quite in harmony with the legitimate purposes of Politic. So far from man having an original right to satisfy his desires, we have seen, that a right in one man is the offspring, and to that extent the correlative, of a duty in another, and that duty, which is thus the parent

of rights, is itself the offspring of Conscience, being any choice of feeling or of action which Conscience commands. And so far from right conscious action consisting in the satisfaction of desires, and aiming at the attainment of the largest possible Sum of satisfactions, we have seen on the contrary, that it consists in selecting and adopting one out of several alternative desires, on the ground of its being the most conducive to harmony between the powers, or in the character, of the agent. The reason for this great difference between these findings and those of any form of Eudæmonism is, that, by the method of subjective analysis, we take consciousness, or experience as it actually comes to us, as our sole datum and object-matter of analysis, instead of taking as our datum a world of ready made objects, that is to say, the common-sense world of Persons and Things, together with the conceptions and relations involved in them as such, which is the primary assumption of the empirical and therefore *a priori* method.

It is true that, starting from the basis of this empirical assumption, we can to some extent, though by no means exhaustively, construct in thought the history of mankind's progress in civilisation, and trace the development of arts, institutions, manners, ideas, and feelings, the formation of societies, states, forms of law and government, the growth or decay of altruism, justice, and benevolence, the extension of industry and commerce, the rise and decay of religions, churches, and creeds, and in short whatever falls under the widest conception expressed by the term History, both prior and posterior to the date of the earliest written records which we possess. But the nature

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of the actions which have gone to make this History cannot be learnt from the History alone. It can be learnt only from the consciousness with which those actions were done, the consciousness which accompanied their doing, for this it is in which the nature of the actions consisted. This indeed we can only indirectly learn, as we learn the consciousness of our own contemporaries, by the evidence of their acts, interpreted by the light of our own consciousness, by which the nature of our own acts is made known to us. The consciousness which accompanies human action, and which may be called its illuminated moiety, the action being illuminated by the light of our own self-consciousness, is the province of Ethic; and Ethic is consequently a subjective as well as a practical science, because it deals primarily by analysis with the nature of human action, before proceeding to construct, or professing to understand, its history. This plain distinction is ignored and traversed by all forms of the so-called ethical theory of Eudæmonism.

A theory so radically false as this, a theory built on assumptions so crude as those of an original right in man to satisfy his desires, and of right conscious action consisting in the attainment of the largest possible sum of satisfactions, can plainly oppose no barrier to even the wildest extravagances of individual folly and caprice. It tends rather to encourage and consecrate them. It is in vain for Eudæmonists to insist on the innate and ultimate character of the sympathetic affections, the love of mothers for their offspring, the mutual affection between parents and children, the attraction between the sexes, the bond of kinship, the ties

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of friendship, the necessity of alliances, the charms of justice and equity, the advantages of mutual concession and compromise, in short of any or all the bonds which hold society together, and render advance in civilisation possible. These things are admitted facts of human nature, or admitted dictates of human reason. They are the common property of all theories alike, and the *explicanda* of all. To insist upon and recommend them as rules of action is an empty preachment, so long as the moralists who recommend them sanction by their theory the paramount claim of Desire to be the ultimate basis of right action. They destroy by theory what they recommend as practice, and those whose delight is in disorder and anarchy may justly condemn them out of their own mouth. Their theory of right is nothing else than the rule of the strongest, transferred from the region of overt actions to that of immanent desires and acts of choice. It would be better to have no theory at all, than one which in principle demands what in practice it condemns.

The practical value of a true ethical theory is great, though indirect. It does not consist in its directly hortatory influence upon action, either immanent or overt. It consists in furnishing those, who by example, speech, or writing, directly influence public opinion and conduct, with a single consistent body of doctrine, common to all alike, to which they may have recourse for testing the truth of their own convictions, and thus giving to their words and actions the weight belonging to every united and undisputed authority. But it is evident, that value of this kind can be possessed

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by that ethical theory only (whatever it may be), which is built on the firm foundation of experientially ascertained facts, and not on loosely conceived assumptions, however luminous these may appear to uninstructed common sense. In going to the facts laid bare by the subjective analysis of consciousness or experience, and seeking in them the basis of ethical theory, we neither withdraw that theory from the light of common intelligibility, nor preclude it from applying to the actions and circumstances of everyday life. It is precisely in application to everyday life that the practical value, as distinguished from the theoretical truth, of an ethical theory must be tested.

The applicability of a theory to the object-matter which it rules is best seen in what are called its *axiomata media*, that is to say, in the case of Ethic, in those general maxims or rules of conduct, which flow directly from its ultimate principles, and by accordance with which the theory approves or condemns particular actions. Now it is just at this point that different theories of Ethic, though built on one and the same foundation of ultimate principles, begin to diverge from one another. Different enquirers will naturally tend to divide the object-matter differently, and consequently to lay stress on different modes of bringing it into connection with ultimate principles, in doing which different sets of *axiomata media* will naturally be employed.

It is beyond the scope of the present Chapter to discuss any of the theories, which may be built upon that foundation of first principles which it has been the purpose of the preceding Sections once

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more to lay, by means of a renewed attempt to analyse subjectively the phenomena of volition. Apart, however, from all particular ethical theories, and without entering into the discussion of any, some general remarks are necessary, in attempting to lay the Foundations of the science, concerning the way in which Conscience operates in modifying the current of volitional action, and the specially religious character which it thereby imprints upon obedience to its dictates. The subject of Religion, a subject which has not hitherto been treated in these pages, will thus be opened, and the whole question raised concerning the nature of religious emotions, and the validity of religious ideas.

The ultimate principles which are the foundation of Ethic, according to the preceding analysis, are two; first, the actual fact of free choice or volition, which carries with it the fact of moral responsibility, on the part of the Subject, to his own self-judgment; and second, the criterion by which the Subject's conscience is guided, in passing those self-judgments, namely, the criterion of an Anticipated Harmony between the volition which it will approve and the Subject's own character as part and parcel of the real world.

The action of the Subject's volition in modifying his own character, and therefore mediately and to some minute extent the Course of Nature as a whole, is thus itself also acted on by Conscience, and a broad distinction becomes apparent between the action of volition as it would be, if unmodified by the action of conscience, and its action when the dictates of conscience prevail to modify it. Desires or motives of every kind which have a *de*

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facto efficacy belong both to its unmodified and to its modified action. Peculiar to its modified action are, first, that desire or motive power which is inherent in the very judgment of rightness, before we have recognised it as a judgment of conscience, and secondly, that desire of obeying judgments of conscience, when we have recognised them as distinct in kind from other judgments. For this recognition brings with it a new desire, or rather a desire of a newly discerned kind, the operation of which along with and upon desires of all other kinds is capable of being distinctly traced, namely, the desire that conscience should be supreme; whereby the judgments of conscience become recognised as distinct motives of action.

But though judgments of conscience thus, through the desire of obeying them, become distinct motives of action, it must be carefully noted, that they do not thereby become the only right motives. They do not obliterate, swallow up, or destroy, all other motives except wrong ones. The motives which they approve acquire, on the contrary, additional strength. For to the judgments of conscience, as judgments, it is essential to judge of motives of all kinds, that is, to approve of some and disapprove of others. It is by no means essential that they should approve only of themselves as motives of action. The fact that, when passed, they become themselves motives influencing volitions, cannot rob them of their essential nature as judgments, nor prevent them from approving other motives, of all varieties of kind, as the right motives to be adopted and acted on in particular volitions. If it did so, all energy

would be knocked out of life, except perhaps in the opinion of here and there a pedant; and their function would be to starve, suppress, and kill, not, as in reality it is, to invigorate and quicken. Not to mention that, in innumerable actions, and in innumerable individuals, motives of self-interest in some shape or other, some fear of suffering, or some hope of happiness, are the only motives which have, or at least have come to have, any weight whatever in influencing conduct, and are therefore the necessary antecedent condition of a first step being taken in quitting a downward for an upward course. The primary function of conscience is essential to it throughout, and consists, not in substituting the single desire of obedience to itself for the other countless desires of human nature, but in judging concerning desires of any and every kind, which are perpetually offered as alternatives of choice in spontaneous redintegration, which of any pair or group of alternatives is the right desire for the individual agent to choose, he being what he is, at that particular juncture, and in those special circumstances in which he finds himself.

It is in the fact, that the motive of obeying conscience is so closely combined with those motives, belonging to other kinds, which conscience approves, that is to say, in the phenomenon of acting "from mixed motives," as it is called, that the great difficulty lies, when we are judging conduct. Both in looking at our own past conduct in retrospect, and more especially in endeavouring to form an opinion of the conduct of other persons, by analogy with our own, it is no easy task to discriminate that part

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in actions which has been dictated by conscience, from that part in them which is due to the strength of desires or motives unmodified by the action of conscience.

So far by way of indicating the nature of the task set before conscience, and the difficulty inherent in it. We feel the difficulty most clearly in cases belonging to our own present conduct. For instance, in cases where time-honoured customs or venerable traditions are concerned, and the question arises, whether the preservation of the spirit which they once embodied, or of the truth which was their ultimate origin, does not require the relinquishment of the custom, the surrender of the traditional belief, —and what our own course ought to be in respect thereto,—the voice of conscience will often speak in hesitating and uncertain tones, and give no decided response. The choice which is truly *de jure* will then seem to lie, at one moment on the side of ancient authority, at another on that of daring innovation; the special difficulty for conscience being, not to settle any purely theoretical question, but to discriminate how far the Subject's own inclinations or interests bias the interpretation which he puts upon facts of human nature and human history, which can be, at the best, but imperfectly and uncertainly known to him.

These of course are instances taken from one class of questions only, in which conscience is liable to be perplexed and baffled. But there is hardly any class of questions in which similar perplexities may not arise. The hope of final extrication, the hope of rendering the voice of conscience more distinct and decided whenever such

cases occur, would seem to lie in forming the habit of sincere attention and obedience to its dictates, whenever they are distinct and decided, at whatever cost to cherished wishes, ideas, or predilections. This is one of the *axiomata media* which all ethical theories, built on the foundation of conscience, would agree in adopting. And the fact which it recognises is plain, namely, that there are two cases under which judgments of conscience fall, one where its dictates are distinct and decided, the other where they are as yet hesitating and perplexed, but expectant of future extrication from perplexity, should similar questions arise, by means of the gradual attainment of clearer knowledge or deeper insight into the nature and working of the agent's own desires or motives.

Now it was shown at the beginning of the 4th Section, that the function of conscience is twofold in another respect;—it perceives what is right to do or to avoid, and it also perceives whether the agent acts or does not act in accordance with that perception. Combining this with what has just been said of the action of conscience on volitions, we see that there are and have been, from the earliest origin of conscience in the conscious Subject, two classes of actions, two classes of desires, motives, or tendencies to action, the distinction between which originates in the judgments of conscience, and which is therefore wholly different from that distinction between acts or desires which originates in the pleasurable or painful quality of the acts or desires themselves. The *right* or the *wrong* of an act or a desire is, essentially and from its origin, different from its

pleasurable or painful quality considered *per se*. Its rightness is a new kind of pleasurable quality, due to its conformity to the dictates of conscience; its wrongness a new kind of painful quality due to its disaccordance with those dictates.

It is not to the keenness or intensity, nor even to the felt specific quality, even in what we call the highest and noblest of the personal emotions, that their felt rightness or moral goodness is attributable; it is to their fulfilling the law of Harmony. The sense of dealing and being dealt with justly and equitably by and with all those with whom we stand in any relation, near or remote, and the peculiar quality of the emotions of love and the sympathetic affections generally, have simply as feelings an indescribable value and charm. And indeed the whole of moral goodness may be well summed up under the two heads of Love and Justice. But these qualities, considered simply as feelings or affections, are not sufficient to account for that sense of moral validity or rightness, by which they, and the actions which they attend or seem to prompt, are characterised. For this we must look to something which connects them with the whole of Existence, and incorporates them with its laws, as well beyond as within the limits of our positive knowledge. Their validity arises from their being instances which exemplify and in a measure realise, in concrete existence, that Harmony which, in its most abstract form, is the synonym of Law itself.

We here come upon what is the very point of union, juncture, or divergence, that is, of identity, or sameness in difference, of natural and moral law,

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the point at which the latter is, as it were, rooted in the former, the point at which the free, self-determined, and self-conscious action of man, subject to the law which as such it both ought to obey and knows that it ought to obey, that is, to moral law, is differentiated from, and yet remains one with, the action or process of Nature, and of man as part of Nature, subject to laws which it cannot but obey, and which make it what it is, that is, to laws of Nature in the strict sense. I mean, that the anticipated harmony between volitions and character, which is the criterion of right and wrong in choice, the criterion of conscience, becomes itself the object of a natural and inevitable desire, though contra-distinguished from desires taken simply, whatever may be their special quality, complexity, or intensity. It has its immediately supporting real condition, though not its justification as a desire, in the neuro-cerebral mechanism of redintegrative processes spontaneous and voluntary. The same is true also of volition, which may itself be considered as an unique desire, namely, as the desire for choosing between desires, and which by this peculiarity is also contrasted with desires simply. And the desire of realising the criterion, or the harmony anticipated from making a volitional choice, is involved in the mechanism of volition itself, as a power contra-distinguished from the desires taken simply, which are its object-matter and its pabulum, and is strengthened with every increase in the strength and development of volition, as the power which thus deals with them. The desire of harmonising the character, therefore, among all the desires which arise in redintegration,

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is that which is the most deeply rooted in the nature of the human subject, being in fact identical with the health and strength of that function, namely volition, by which his moral character is fashioned and sustained, and which is the representative, in organisms of a high order, of what in the lowest is conceivable only as the *vis insita* proper to organic as distinguished from non-organic existents. The character is the man. In forming his character he is leading a line of advance in the onward-going life of Nature as a whole.

When conscience perceives that a desire has been adopted, or an act done, in disaccordance with its own clear and distinct dictates, the conscious Subject, who is the real agent functioning both in the choice (or act) and in the conscience of it, has the sense of transgressing an authority which rests on essentially different grounds from any power of reward or punishment, or from the pleasurable or painful consequences of the choice or act, considered *per se*. It is the *new kind* of painful quality, the new kind spoken of above as originating in the judgments of conscience, which he then experiences. Conscience is the authority against which he is figuratively described as offending, the terms of the description being drawn from the later, and, at the time of describing, more familiar phenomena of social or civil institutions. The fact that the anticipated harmony, which is the criterion of conscience, is itself desired, is not the source of its validity; but it is evidence of its *de facto* permanence, or of the depth of the roots which it has in Nature, as the Order of real Conditioning.

The new kind of painful quality which is felt in

these cases is the emotional feeling of Remorse of Conscience; and the choice or act itself, the wrongness of which is felt as remorse, is described as moral guilt or Sin. These are different sides or facets, as it were, of one and the same choice or act. As compared to other acts, actual or possible, it is *wrong;* as felt by the Subject at the moment of choice, it is *sense of guilt;* as felt by him in retrospect, it is *remorse;* as putting him out of harmony with the moral law apprehended as universally valid for all consciously active beings, it is *sin.* These characters depend directly and solely on the nature of conscience, conceived as a capacity of perception and judgment, against the dictates of which the act is done. Moral guilt and moral goodness are thus the creatures of conscience, prior to the origin of which function in the Subject they have for him no existence, and the terms describing them no meaning. And since the conflict between desires approved and desires disapproved by conscience is perpetually going on, from the moment when the function of conscience first arises in the Subject, it is plain that, in the fact of this conflict, we have the basis, or the evidence, of what in Theology is called Original Sin. What Theologians have made out of this fact need not here be discussed. At the same time it is necessary to remark, that the view thus taken is in distinct conflict with that which considers Sin as a supervening character in moral guilt, a character which supervenes upon it in the imagination of those only, who first imagine a Divine Lawgiver who has enacted positive laws after the fashion of human potentates. This imagination may be among the conditions in the

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genesis, or appearance in history, of the idea of Sin; but it is inadequate to explain its nature. The sense of Sin is in reality one of the data upon which our idea of God is founded.

Corresponding remarks will hold good concerning the new kind of pleasurable quality, attending acts of choice done in conformity to the dictates of conscience, and arising in them in consequence of it. There is no need to follow this out in a detailed description. It is only necessary to note, that the effect of conscience, when it arises in the Subject, is to enrich the stores of emotional feeling with two new kinds of emotion, one pleasurable the other painful, which stand to moral action in a relation analogous to that which reward and punishment hold to overt acts which are commanded or forbidden by civil powers, and also to that which their good or bad natural consequences hold to overt acts which are conformable, or the reverse, to the dictates of prudence. These new kinds of emotion, which owe their nature and origin to conscience, are the sanctions of moral obligation, as those to which they are analogous are the sanctions of law, and the sanctions of circumspection.

But although at the present day we are able, by means of careful analysis, to trace these new and special kinds of emotion, together with the sense of moral obligation, of which they are the sanctions, back to their source in conscience, it is impossible to suppose that mankind could do so, in what we call the primitive periods of their history. The feelings were familiar parts of man's experience, but their nature and origin were enveloped in mystery.

They arise, as we now know, from conscience; but conscience was then itself mysterious, being as yet undistinguished from other functions or modes of consciousness, with which it was closely, and, as it would then seem, inextricably intertwined. The sanctions of prudence and of law would be comparatively easy to extricate and comprehend. They would be referable, the one to those facts and forces of Nature which were regular and comparatively constant in their course and incidence, the other to the action of those human beings who constituted the Society, of which any particular individual was a member. Not that even these conceptions would be obvious, still less clear of mystery, from the first. But in their case, there would be an inheritance of experience, a nucleus of intelligibility, partly perhaps transmitted by ancestors, and preserved in the structure and functioning of the organism, from pre-human times, and partly resting on instruction imparted by parents to children *de novo*, round which the facts constituting the natural and the civil order would gradually group themselves, in the apprehension of individuals; and as the facts accumulated, the corresponding conceptions would gradually emerge into greater consistency and definiteness.

In the case, on the other hand, of the sense of moral obligation and its sanctions, there would be no external or visible facts to which they were obviously attached, or which were capable of furnishing any natural explanation, why, and when, and to what degree, they would be experienced. Yet to something or other it was imperatively necessary to attach them, owing to the law of human reason,

which impels us to reduce all facts to some intelligible order. They therefore became dependent for explanation upon the theories which, in different races, and under different circumstances, were from age to age prevalent concerning man's total environment, organic and inorganic, including his own place and function therein. These theories were doubtless at first of a highly fanciful character, giving birth to myths and legends in immense variety. But the field occupied by them was one which inevitably became narrower, as the conceptions of law natural and law civil gradually attained systematisation, and encroached upon it. In other words, the domain of Myth contracts, as that of Law expands. The whole of visible Nature, and indeed Existence itself, being in reality subject to Uniformity or Law, an ever increasing portion of it is from time to time perceived to be so, as human intelligence develops. So it must have been from the dawn of intelligence onwards, and so it continues to be at the present day. What we have learnt in recent periods is this, not to fill up with Myths that portion of Existence, the laws of which still remain unknown to us, but explicitly to confess our ignorance concerning it.

Now the theories available for the purpose of rendering the phenomena of conscience intelligible, in the earliest period of human or pre-human existence which we have any means of imagining, would be theories built on the hypothesis, that conscious life and action from conscious motives were attributes of all kinds and classes of natural objects, including even what we now call lifeless.

Under the law of judging the less known by analogy with the better known, man would naturally be led to attribute a consciousness like his own to all objects whatever, which seemed to have an empirically separate existence, and thus not only to animals, which would to a great extent be the truth, but also to trees and forests, to the solid earth itself, to stones, crags, and mountain peaks, to rivers and streams, to the sea, to the sun, moon, and stars, and to the vault of heaven which contained them, to which would also seem to belong clouds, wind, and rain, the phenomena of dawn and sunset, day and night, storms, lightning, and thunder.

I am aware that in what has just been said I am venturing on ground well trodden by students and controversialists in Anthropology. And therefore I should wish these remarks, as well as those which are to follow, to be taken as subject to the criticism of experts, and as made in expectation of the conclusions which may be established as the final result of their labours. We know that mankind in its normal course of development has passed into, and in many cases continues to remain in, a stage of believing in the agency of Unseen, Divine, and Personal Beings, upholding and directing the whole visible frame of Nature; and that, by those who hold this belief, the phenomena of conscience are directly, and in an especial manner, referred to those Divine Agents. This being so, it becomes of minor importance to philosophy to trace the precise steps, by which this belief was first originated and then developed, steps moreover which must have been more or less different in different

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communities of mankind, scattered over different regions and climates of the earth. Nevertheless it is not unimportant to philosophy, to endeavour to form some general notion of the kind of steps which must have been taken in the process, in order to connect the process itself with its own more strictly philosophical analysis. It is this general purpose only which I have in view, and in this provisional sense only I wish to be understood.

It is, then, I think, difficult to imagine how man or his pre-human ancestor, at the epoch or epochs when he first became distinctly aware of the real external world, in the manner which I have attempted to analyse in the concluding Chapters of Book I, could have avoided judging the real objects, lifeless as well as living, by which he perceived himself surrounded, and with many of which he came into perpetual contact, by analogy to his own organism, which was known to him as the seat of his own consciousness, and thus attributing to them a consciousness analogous to his own. Just as man's first laboriously acquired perception of his own body, as the central object of a material world, prior to his perception of the location of his own consciousness therein, is a perception of it as a visible and tangible object, not different in kind from the objects with which it comes into contact, so also when, after reaching that cardinal perception of location (as I have called it), he proceeds to a further exercise of his reasoning powers, and endeavours to understand or render intelligible the external world (his own body included) by comparing and classifying its phenomena, so bringing them into a conceptual or theoretical order, he

would naturally be led, in forming his first rude theory, to construe all alike by the light of that perception of location, that is, to read back into all material objects other than his own body, by imagination, presumption, or unrecognised hypothesis, whatever feelings and ideas seemed to have their seat in his own body, and to constitute his knowledge of himself. A located consciousness would naturally be his first hypothesis, in endeavouring to construe theoretically the world of real objects external to himself.

Men would thus be led at first, and might possibly long continue, without criticism of what they were doing, to personify lifeless natural objects; spontaneously considering, for instance, that rocks were stationary, water flowing, winds violent, fire hot, trees green, and so on, because they preferred so to be and so to act, or perhaps, more strictly expressed, because they were so *and liked it.* Not that men would not be, all the time, fully alive to the differences between lifeless and living objects, or between what we now call Persons and what we now call Things, or that they would not act towards them in totally different ways, but that these differences would, at first, lie within the conception of objects as seats of consciousness, and would seem to be explicable by differences in their several modes of consciousness just as much as by differences in their physical nature. The presumption would be in favour of all objects being seats of consciousness, and it would only gradually be perceived, that is, in one class of objects after another, that, in the case of many of them, no evidence of their being conscious was forthcoming. For, as a

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matter of theoretically understanding the nature of objects, men would have at first no positive notions to apply in interpretation of it, save only notions drawn from the experience of their own living and conscious organisms. Conscious life would thus be the earliest theoretical conception formed by man or his pre-human ancestor, and this conception would at first be applied universally. All later cosmical or theological theories would naturally be either corrections or developments of this conception. It is moreover, in all probability, to this same early period of conscious activity, which would be an emotional as well as an intellectual one, that we must trace the origin and continuous development of human Language.

At a later period, when man's self-knowledge had somewhat increased, when in his own case he had distinguished, say for instance, the breath of life from the body which it seemed to animate, and supposing him to have referred his consciousness to this animating breath, instead of to the body generally, then and thereby the theory, which ascribed conscious life and action to natural phenomena simply, would be replaced by, or developed into, one which imagined personal beings, souls, or spirits, distinct from, but still inhabiting and governing, the phenomena in question, in a manner analogous to that in which, as he imagined, his own conscious life-breath inhabited and governed his own bodily frame.

To these conceptions the phenomena of dreams, in which the dreamer seems to visit distant or unknown scenes, and play a part in intercourse with deceased or unknown persons, or to be visited

by the dead and again hear their voice, would lend a powerful support, by furnishing what to him would be almost irresistible evidence of the existence of a world of spirits, distinct and separate from the world of matter perceivable by his waking senses.

We have moreover seen, in the Chapters just referred to, the great difficulty which always has been, and still is, involved in distinguishing the content of our own panorama of objective thought from that of the real objects thought of, which that panorama is our only means of apprehending. To effect this distinction would be the chief difficulty with which man would have to contend, during that period of intense and eager intellectual, imaginative, and emotional activity, which we must conceive as coinciding with that cerebral development which is the distinguishing characteristic of humanity, as compared to living beings lower in the scale. Of that period of cerebral activity and development the conception of a world of spirits, partly spirits of the dead, partly spirits ruling the phenomena of Nature, would be the chief theoretical product. This would be the fundamental idea governing man's whole speculative thought of the universe, prior to any such departments as what we now call science, philosophy, and religion, being distinguishable within it. At the same time a classification and a hierarchy would be established, in that thought, among the personal beings who had now become for man the ruling powers of these natural phenomena, a hierarchy which would follow the lines indicated by the relative majesty and importance of the phenomena which they were supposed to rule.

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Theories of this kind, whatever might be their form, and at whatever stage of development they might stand, would offer the readiest means of explaining, would be the most obvious order of ideas with which to connect, the otherwise unaccountable sense of moral obligation and the feelings which were its sanctions. The dictates of Conscience would then be interpreted as expressions of the will of some member or members of the ruling hierarchy of the powers of Nature, or of the spirits of the departed; and its sanctions, remorse and peace of mind, would become the indication of their anger or their favour.

But what would be the inevitable consequence? This interpretation and this connection of the dictates of Conscience and its sanctions, remorse and peace of mind, would for the first time give a moral character to the ruling powers of Nature, or to departed spirits considered as rulers, and for the first time invest them with what we now call the distinctive attributes of Divinity. Thenceforward they would be venerated as Gods; and why? Not solely because they were powers that ruled, but because, being powers that ruled, they were the authors and inspirers of moral right and wrong. Consciousness, Will, Power, they were supposed to possess before; now they became possessed, in addition, of a Moral Nature, commanding and rewarding what was *right*, forbidding and punishing what was *wrong*. The first idea of the Divine is thus given by, and originates in, the moral phenomena of Conscience. So far from the dictates of Conscience being perceived as right because Conscience is known to be the voice of

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God in the soul, the reverse is the case; God is conceived as God, that is, as loving and commanding what is right, because He is held to speak in the dictates of Conscience. Man has no knowledge of God at all, save through his own moral nature, of which Conscience constitutes the essence.

The current theories of Religion either altogether ignore, or else invert the order of this connection. Those theories ignore the connection, which trace the genesis of religions back, along the various lines of development taken by man's speculative theories, based on the fundamental idea of the conscious animation and personality of natural objects or phenomena, to some particular form, or set of forms, taken by that idea in the earliest times. Their result is to make Religion a falsity, by basing it solely on Fancy or on Myth. Those theories, on the other hand, invert the order of the connection, which either tacitly assume, or consciously endeavour to prove, that man has some speculative idea of God's nature, say, as a personal authority higher in perfection than himself, independently of the phenomena of his Conscience, an idea with which he can compare the dictates of his Conscience, and so test their moral quality. These two lines of thought, which are diametrically opposed to each other, inasmuch as the one leads to regarding Religion as founded in falsity, the other to regarding it as founded in truth, yet meet and agree in this, that both hold the idea of God to belong originally to the region of speculation, and to be based solely on speculative not on practical insight. This false conception is common to both alike.

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It is true that there is a speculative basis for the idea of God, but not that this is its only basis, or sufficient of itself to account for what is distinctive and characteristic in it, namely, the essential attribute of moral goodness. The speculative basis gives only the idea of Power as its legitimate outcome, an attribute which the idea of God shares with that of Nature, the whole "eternal mundane spectacle," from which in fact the idea of power is derived. So far as it is this Power only which is attributed to any Personal, that is, living and self-conscious, Beings, or even to a single supreme Person, we cannot possibly see in the Supreme Being anything more than the personification of Nature as a whole, by an act of human imagination. And then, if we call this Supreme Being God, the idea of God so formed is not only inadequate, one-sided, and untrue, from omitting the distinctive characteristic of the idea which, in consequence of the action of Conscience, we really form of Him; but it is also liable to the criticism to which the positive science of psychology subjects the idea of Personality, with the result of showing that personality, as we actually know it in ourselves, is never a real agent or agency, but is the dependent result, in modes of consciousness, of the structure and functioning of physical organisms. The merely speculative idea, therefore, of the Supreme Being as a Person, is not only not what we really mean by God, but also hopelessly breaks down as a speculative conception explanatory of the causal agency, or primal source of the powers and forces, operative in Nature.

Yet some speculative basis the idea of God must necessarily have, and that just as much for us at the present day, as for men at all other periods, even the earliest, of their history and development, since the dawn of Conscience. The same law of human reason is operative in us now as then, the law which impels us to reduce all facts to a consistent system. What is this speculative basis, if it is not, as we have seen it is not, the idea of a Supreme Personal Agent, developed out of the earliest crude personifications of natural phenomena? It is plainly something which is universal and necessary in our thought of all reality. It therefore cannot be any particular mode of existence, or particular existent of any kind. It is the Power involved in Existence itself, the Power which is co-extensive and co-eternal with Existence in its entirety, whether revealed to man through media of sense or not. It is, in other words, the Power or Agency which is the fact or object thought of by our conception of Real Conditioning, whether positively known to us or not, and therefore belonging, not only to the seen world, but also to that which is unseen and infinite beyond it. This is the object of that idea of man's, which is the speculative basis of his idea of God. The raising or completion of this speculative basis into that full idea is due, as already shown, to the moral ideas and feelings which are the creatures of Conscience.

Now in thus completing our idea of God, by ascribing a moral nature and moral perfection to the Power which is the really conditioning agency of the Universe, we do as a fact personify and

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deify that Power, just as our primitive ancestors personified and deified the particular existents or forces of Nature, including their own departed progenitors. But between the two cases there is this broad and essential difference. We do not, as they did, regard the power personified as a valid theoretical explanation of the phenomena of Conscience. We do not duplicate in imagination the phenomena of human Conscience, and then take the imagined duplicate for the originating cause of the human phenomena, so making the latter serve as their own explanation. We know that the Power which we personify and deify is infinite and eternal, is the Power which, in Scriptural phrase, "worketh all in all," and therefore cannot be positively known as the special cause of any particular class or classes of phenomena, rather than of others. He escapes all speculative judgment of ours, whether for praise or blame, because of the infinity and eternity alike of His nature and of His works, which admit of no existence, not themselves, with which they can be compared, and by comparison with which they can be judged. Our ascription of moral goodness to Him is an act not of the speculative but of the practical reason, an act not of knowledge but of faith.

It is active and habitual obedience to conscience which inspires, and is impossible without inspiring, the confidence, that the power which we exert in so acting is identical in kind, and continuous in fact, with the inmost nature of the infinite and eternal Power which sustains the Universe. It is true that we cannot think of this confidence without throwing the fact of it into conceptual form, and

so framing a conception of the Power towards whom the confidence is felt; but this alters nothing in the nature of the source from which that confidence, and therefore also that conception, springs. It does not make that conception the source, instead of the result, of the confidence inspired by active obedience to conscience. The conception which we thus frame of the inmost nature of the Eternal Power has, therefore, a practical, not speculative, origin. It is not framed or adopted to explain the phenomena of conscience, but is framed and adopted as our conception of what those phenomena themselves are. The only knowledge on which it rests is a knowledge of our own confidence in the Eternal Power, which, in feeling that confidence, we feel as identical and continuous with ourselves. Expressed in conceptual form, the Eternal Power is a Person; but this conception is the creature of Faith.

The same essential difference may be stated also in another way. The primitive idea of the powers of Nature, which was the speculative basis for the primitive man's idea of God, was the idea of a Cause or Agent existing prior to, and independent of, the effects which he produced and the creatures which he made. Now this idea, which we call the idea of a Cause or Causal Agent, is self-contradictory, inasmuch as we cannot think of an agent acting, so as to produce anything not-himself, without having something, not-himself, whereon to act, that is, something existing independently of himself, which limits his action. But in the corresponding thought of modern times, which I have adopted and attempted to develop in the present work, in

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determining the speculative basis of our present completed idea of God, the idea of Real Conditioning is substituted for that of Causation, and the idea of Real Conditions, operating within an infinite Universe, for that of causes operating upon a finite World. Moreover we now approach all ultimate questions from the subjective side, and in so doing we find, that the really conditioning agency in knowledge is subservient to, and has its own nature made known to us by, the states and processes of consciousness which are its conditionates. With us, the idea of real condition excludes consciousness, including it in that of conditionate, so that the idea of real condition embraces less than that of cause; on the other hand, in another respect, it includes, with us, more than that of cause, inasmuch as it includes the idea of the action and re-action of real conditions on one another. It includes that which is operated on as well as that which operates, as both alike essential to the idea of real conditioning.

Consequently, and in one word, we no longer speculatively conceive of God as a Mind, creating and governing Matter, or creating and governing other Minds. Not, however, because proof has failed, that God is a Mind; but because proof has failed, that Mind is a reality. For this reason it is, that we have to seek some other way of conceiving speculatively the Reality which we call God, or in other words, some other way of framing that idea which is the speculative basis of the concrete, though inadequate, idea which we form of Him. In one way, this new mode of framing the speculative basis of our idea of God brings us into closer and

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more manifest connection with Him, inasmuch as He is now conceived as the whole of that Power of real conditioning, of which the real conditioning of every human and individual consciousness is an infinitesimal portion and derivative. No connection can be closer than this. On the other hand, since this idea no longer, like that of Mind, contains the conceptions of consciousness and personality within itself, the whole burden of including those attributes in our completed idea of God is thrown upon the other constituent of the completed idea, namely, upon the part derived from the phenomena of conscience. The question then inevitably arises, In what way these phenomena justify us in ascribing consciousness, personality, and moral goodness, to the Power which sustains Existence in its entirety, or in other words, in conceiving that Power as a conscious personality, distinct from those of the infinitesimal individuals who are its derivatives?

Now since it is Conscience as the judge of practical and volitional action to which we have recourse for an answer, it is plain that we must not put the question as a speculative one, demanding a speculative and positive conception as its answer. Conscience with its sense of right and wrong, and of moral obligation with its sanctions, remorse and peace of mind, can furnish no speculative reasons for holding that the Power, which is the sustaining energy of the Universe from first to last, is either endowed as a whole with a consciousness and personality of its own, or that it is not so endowed. This is wholly beyond the reach of speculative reason itself, which cannot even grasp the full idea of the Power in question, seeing that it is infinite

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and eternal, much less determine the question of its consciousness or of its personality. And to expect an answer of this speculative kind from conscience would be neither more nor less than transforming it *pro hac vice* into speculative reason, for the purpose of performing a task to which speculative reason is confessedly inadequate. Still more vain would it be to expect a speculative answer from any other factor than conscience, in practical reason. But if we question conscience simply as a factor in practical reason, that is, as judgment of the preferability of opposite alternatives for choice and volition, and expect such an answer only as practical reason can give, the answer is plain.

The sense of the reality of moral obligation, and of the reality of the difference between right and wrong, is something more than the knowledge, that we shall be visited with the sanctions of remorse or peace of mind in our own conscience, when we reflect on our action. It is not the feeling or the not feeling those sanctions, which makes the perception of the difference between right and wrong, and of the consequent obligation to do right, what they are. These perceptions do not depend for their nature on either the fact or the expectation of punishment or reward. We experience them as realities of consciousness independently. This is especially clear in those cases, spoken of above, where the voice of conscience is perplexed and uncertain; for in them we can distinguish between the really right course to take, if we did but know it, and the actual perception which we have of it, the dimness of which is owing to the deficiency of our self-knowledge. Again, it

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becomes clear in cases where we are conscious, in retrospect, of having acted or chosen contrary to what we know distinctly to be the voice of conscience now, that is, at the time of retrospect, and what, as we also know now, would have been perceived as its voice then, if we had chosen to listen. These are the cases of what is called "an awakened conscience." The sense of the reality of the difference between right and wrong then takes the more specific shape of a sense of Shame.

In these cases, and most forcibly in the latter, we necessarily, by reason of the intimate connection between emotions and their framework or imagery, imagine a knowledge different from, and more intimate and searching than, our own, even of our own conscious desires and motives, and many times more searching than that of any other human beings like ourselves. For we know that in our own self-knowledge there are degrees, and that many things may be hidden from a present survey, which would come to light if examined with a more persistent attention. Especially is this the case with the modes in which desires are connected with one another at the moment of their arising above the threshold of consciousness, in consequence of the working of the cerebral mechanism below the threshold, of which we have no immediate consciousness. It is in this dependent connection with their really conditioning mechanism or agency, however it may be conceived, whether as physical or psychical, that the real genesis of desires and that of their differences consists. Yet this connection, though real, is just that which is hidden from our knowledge of those desires and

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their differences, at the time of experiencing them, and just that which, if known, would render our self-knowledge of them complete.

We imagine, therefore, in consequence of the known reality of this agency and this connection, a consciousness which knows them when we do not, and which knows them whether the acquisition of a similar knowledge of them is or is not for us a possibility. Not that the felt necessity of this imagination is any proof of the real existence of the knowledge or consciousness imagined. The point is, that the possibility of imagining a consciousness different from our own, in cases where we know objects to be real, whose details though real are unknown to us, here becomes a necessity, in consequence of the personal emotion and interest specially attaching to our own acts of choice, as part and parcel of ourselves, with an intimacy and keenness unparalleled by any other kind or mode of experience.

Thus it is that our sense of the reality of our own acts, and of the reality of the difference which they involve between moral right and wrong, in attempting to obey the dictates of conscience, carries with it a sense of the perception of those acts, both in their nature and in their genesis, by another consciousness, and thus involves the idea of an omniscient witness of our volitions in their entirety, whose perceptions are another subjective measure or standard of the reality, which we only partially and dimly perceive. In other words, the idea of an unseen and omniscient witness, not of our overt actions only, but of our most secret thoughts, and not only of our most secret thoughts,

but of the nature and working of that cerebral mechanism on which (as we now conceive) they really depend, and which (like whatever else we may conceive as its substitute) lies below the threshold of the consciousness which it determines,—this idea is the objective framework or imagery in which we embody our sense of the reality of our volitions and actions, in respect of their moral character as right or wrong. And this keen sense of their reality has probably been operative at all stages of human history, since the dawn of conscience, just as it is at the present day; and was that which constituted the hidden nexus between the phenomena of conscience and the natural phenomena which were the deities of primitive man, just as in the present day it leads us to ascribe consciousness and personality to the infinite and eternal Power, which we conceive as sustaining the seen and unseen Universe.

It may, I think, be said, that it is practically impossible to act habitually and intentionally according to the dictates of conscience, and yet avoid the belief of an omniscient witness, other than ourselves, of our actions and the motives which prompt them. But the idea is wholly practical, having its origin in conscience alone, which is a factor in practical reason. This is shown, not only by the analysis now given of the way in which it originates, but also by the fact that, the moment we attempt to realise it, as a speculative idea, in a definite and positive conception, we recognise our total inability to do so. We cannot realise in thought the conception of an infinite and eternal Power, still less can we identify the conception of

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Personality with it. Personality is the object of a definite idea, known to us only as dependent on finite organisms; and to speak of an *Infinite Person* as the object of a definite conception is a contradiction in terms. Our speculative reason can comprehend as a definite and concrete reality only that which can be conceived as finite, and conceive only that for which there are positively known data. Conscience, therefore, in making us feel that the Power which sustains the Universe is conscious and omniscient, compels us practically to personify it, but thereby at the same time proposes to our speculative reason a task which it is beyond its power to perform. In this way and no other it is, that the phenomena of Conscience justify us in ascribing consciousness, personality, and moral goodness, to the infinite Power which sustains the Universe. The language of Conscience is the language of the heart, and to cry to God as a Person is its spontaneous utterance and dictate.

But it is the prerogative of Conscience alone thus pratically to compel the personification spoken of, and does not belong to practical reason generally, or to volitional actions other than those which flow from obeying or recognising Conscience. It is true of volition generally, that the forward-looking or anticipatory attitude of mind, which we adopt in all volitional action, involves a practical belief, that reasonable anticipations may be relied on, or, in other words, will be realised. And of the truth of this belief there can be no conclusive speculative proof; for such a proof can only rest on some positive and certain knowledge, and all positive and certain knowledge is a knowledge

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only of the past, not of the future. But between the anticipations involved in volitions generally, as in choosing the greatest imagined pleasure, and those involved in volition governed by conscience, there is a wide difference. Both are cases of practical reason, being founded on anticipations involving belief, as distinguished from knowledge. But the former are anticipations of some End or purpose more or less definitely conceived, which is the motive of the volition, and are limited to the conception formed of it; while the latter are anticipations, not of any particular End or purpose, the attainment of which is the motive of the volition, but of repeated acts of obedience to the criterion or law of harmony, the ever increasing pleasure attached to which makes the very act of so living its own reward, apart from the consideration of any other end, that is to say, of the states of consciousness in which from time to time it results. The particular motives adopted in obedience to the cardinal desire of obeying conscience are not representations of pleasures to be derived, or received back again by ourselves, from the attainment of particular Ends, but are simply emotional feelings which conscience makes us feel as right, such, for instance, as those of equity and love towards others, self-command and purity from greeds and lusts in respect of ourselves. And the anticipation on which we act in adopting them is the anticipation, that these emotions and these desires will be strengthened in ourselves, and will promote their like in others, whatever shape may be taken by the consequences to which they lead, and irrespective of what

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our own actual share in those consequences will be.

Thus volitions of the former kind are limited, those of the latter unlimited, by their anticipated results. An infinite vista of anticipation is laid open before volitions of the latter kind, volitions in obedience to conscience; a vista of anticipation not confined to the region peopled, as it were, with the products of positive knowledge, but a vista to which the limit between the seen world and the unseen presents no impassable barrier. Both worlds alike are included in the anticipations which volitions obeying conscience involve. Hence it is,—I mean, by reason of the inclusion of the Unseen World in the anticipations involved in obeying conscience,—that it is the infinite Power sustaining Existence in its entirety, to which we are led by conscience to attribute personal feelings like our own, thereby attempting that personification of it in thought, which the nature and limits of our speculative reason preclude our realising as a definite conception. Practical reason, in that form of it which consists in obeying conscience, goes beyond the powers of speculative reason, though still remaining practical. Therefore it is, that, while anticipatory belief is common to both forms of practical reason, we give a special name, the name of *Faith*, to the belief which is involved in obeying conscience, which carries us over the boundary distinguishing religion from morality, and which makes morality known to us as the necessary source and parent of religion.

Faith of this kind is the foundation of all forms of religion which are worthy of the name, even

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when they are professedly based on the quasi-speculative foundation of a revelation proceeding from the Divine Object of the religion. For belief in a revelation necessarily either pre-supposes or includes a belief in the real existence of its author; and this belief, apart from religious faith, must be of a purely speculative nature, and in that character, as we have already seen, must lack the assurance of reason. It is possible to accept a revelation on the basis of a religious faith, but quite impossible to accept a religious faith on the basis of a revelation taken alone. On the other hand, given a religious faith, the possibility of a divine revelation can never be disproved; at least it must be admitted by all those who hold, that the seen world of Matter, with all its forces, laws, and uniformities, depends for its existence upon real but unseen conditions.

But though the possibility of a divine revelation can never be disproved, except by adopting the dogma of the Aseity of Matter, still the difference is great between admitting the possibility and proving the fact of a divine revelation; and especially great, if the fact to be proved involves the interference of other than physical agencies with the forces and laws of Matter, as they are positively known to us. And in any case, whether such an interference be involved or not, and though the possibility be admitted, whence is the proof to come? It is difficult to imagine. Belief in the fact of a divine revelation, since the fact is admitted to be possible, may well consist with the acknowledgment, that the belief is founded in religious faith; and that foundation is the

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reason for the belief. Unless it were so founded, the belief would be as devoid of reason, as the fact is incapable of proof. Religious faith alone renders the belief in a divine revelation reasonable. It is, therefore, a fatal misconception to rest religion on revelation, instead of revelation on religion, or, what is the same thing, to suppose that a religion not resting on revelation cannot be a religion in the true sense of the word, but at the most a system of mere morality; as if the characteristic differentiating religion from morality consisted in the belief of a revelation, and not in that heartfelt faith, which identifies action in obedience to conscience with the eternal power by which the universe is sustained.

The true test of the divine origin of a revelation seems accordingly to lie, not in any credentials which it can offer of its coming from a supra-mundane or supra-physical source, but in the appeal which it makes to the conscience of those to whom it comes; that is to say, in the new light which it throws on their own experience as moral agents, and in the new help which it gives in acting according to their better knowledge. For this no other proximate agency need be supposed, than that same cerebral mechanism which is the proximate agency in consciousness generally. We may well suppose, that divine revelations of this kind have been included among the influences, by which the forms of religion now prevalent among the civilised portions of mankind have come to differ so widely from any form of primitive religion. And yet from some one or more of these they must each of them have

lineally descended, so far as the order of their historical development is concerned. I mean, that the various Theologies of civilised man, which are the intellectual framework or imagery in which he embodies his religion, are lineal descendants of that marriage between the phenomena of Conscience and man's earliest theories of the natural world, which I endeavoured above very briefly to depict.

We at the present day have thus received the idea of God by tradition, and the reality answering to the idea is therefore normally accepted and believed in as a reality, unless and until it is impugned by those who imagine, that it has no other basis than myth-bearing fancies. For the same reason it is liable to be assumed, by enquirers of an opposite school, to be an idea innate in the human mind, that is, an idea the truth of which is immediately and necessarily evident to conscious beings endowed with any form of reason, in addition to sentience. But if the idea were innate, it ought also to be ultimate, in the sense of being unanalysable. And this, I think, the foregoing analysis has shown not to be the case. True, we normally begin by accepting and not by questioning it; but this is sufficiently accounted for by the fact of our having received it by tradition. When we begin to question it, we find that we can trace, at least in outline, the steps by which it has been handed down to us, the modifications which it has undergone in the process, the several ultimate constituents of which it is composed, and the nature of the connection between them. Those constituents, as I have endeavoured to show, expressed in general terms,

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are two, Power and Moral Goodness; and these, however modified in point of their content they may have been, still are, what they have been throughout, the essential and characteristic elements of the idea. The sources of both constituents, as well as of the connection between them, lie deep in the nature of human beings, and the consciousness which we call experience. Yet I think it will be allowed, that they are not wholly beyond the reach of analysis. And if the analysis now given is to be relied on, we must hold, both that the two constituents in question, taken in their generality, are severally permanent and unchangeable, and that the idea is indissoluble which they form by their combination.

There is one other point which it is of great practical importance to notice. It is perfectly open to any one who frankly adopts Faith as the sole ultimate basis of Religion, whatever form of Theology he may accept as its embodiment,—when enforcing and preaching that religion and theology, or when himself endeavouring to act in harmony with his faith,—to reverse, in his teaching or in his own imagination, the order of connection which analysis shows to obtain between religion and morality, and to represent religion as, in one important sense, the parent of morality, rather than morality as the parent of religion.

Religion is the parent of morality in the practical sense, that, when accepted by Faith, it becomes the most powerful of all the motives which can be constantly operative in sustaining the moral life of individuals, by keeping the sense of a mutually felt union with the Eternal and Almighty Being ever

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present to the mind. Faith embodied or expressed in some theology then stands in the place of knowledge, though it is not knowledge of a speculative kind; and it follows from its nature as Faith, that it should do so. The individual adopts this attitude towards the Object of his faith, the moment his faith is unwaveringly fixed. And that this same attitude can also be adopted by religious teachers is due to the fact, that religion always comes to us embodied in some form or other of traditional theology. It is therefore equally true, that without morality there can be no Faith, consequently no Religion, and that Faith and Religion, when once embraced, have an unique re-action upon the moral life, out of which they spring, and become our true point of departure in sustaining and invigorating it.

At the same time, whatever order we may adopt, and whatever may be our theology, the truth must never be lost sight of, that the idea of God, as the great Object of Religion, is an idea of the practical not of the speculative reason; that is to say, that we are unable to form a definite conception of an Infinite Person, or so to identify infinite and eternal Existence with Personality, as to construe to positive thought that indissoluble idea to which we are led by intelligent obedience to Conscience. The cardinal importance of this truth must be my excuse for re-iterating it. To Kant belongs the signal honour of its establishment, together with the distinction between the speculative and the practical reason, which is its philosophical foundation. It is perhaps the greatest of all his titles to our admiration and gratitude. For by this doctrine both conscience was shown to be a necessary mode

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of human thought, and religion, as the creature of conscience, was rendered unassailable by speculative objections. Religion in fact was based upon a foundation of its own, and was proved not merely to be independent of any speculative conception of its divine Object, but positively to reject every such conception as necessarily incompatible with its own nature as religion. In one word, religion founded upon conscience was shown to be a mode of Faith, as distinguished from Knowledge, at the same time, and on the same grounds, that it was shown to be an inseparable element and constituent of human reason. Attacks upon supposed speculative conceptions of the divine Object of religion became innocuous, when once it was made evident that no such conceptions could exist, except as misconceptions of the assailants themselves.—Nevertheless this doctrine, as Kant presents it, is so closely interwoven with his general *a priori* theory, his conception of separate mental faculties, of which the practical reason is one, and particularly with the logical absurdity of "Things-in-themselves," that it requires detaching from that theory, before it is available as truth; in attempting which task, I have done it, I believe, no violence in essentials.

The Reality, then, answering to the idea, or attempted conception, of an Infinite Person, can never be an object of Knowledge as distinguished from Faith, but must remain for us an object of Faith only. The difference between the practical idea and the definite conception, which would realise it in thought, corresponds to and makes manifest the essential difference between Faith and Knowledge. We therefore can never logically use

the word *God* as the name of a Being who is the object of a definite and positive conception, as human beings and other finite existents are. Still less can we definitely connect the will, or any other attributes, of that Being causally, or by way of real conditioning, with any particular effects in the positively known world, otherwise than in the form of an anthropomorphic imagination or framework, expressive of our Faith. Any scientific Teleology of creation, whether optimist or pessimist in character, is an empty dream. At the same time we are for ever delivered from the insane imagination of attempting a Theodicy. All causes and effects, real conditions and conditionates, all forces and operations of Nature, belong alike to the infinite Whole of Existence, and there is no single Being who can be charged, as a separate individuality, with the authorship of either the pleasure or the pain, the enjoyment or the suffering, the moral good or the moral evil, which result from its existence and functioning. To conceive of God as an Existent prior to Existence as a Whole, creating it out of nothing, and making it what it is, involves two empirical assumptions, to say nothing of its being self-contradictory; the assumptions, first, that human Persons are originating sources of agency, and second, that God is a particular Person, of similar nature to the supposed personalities of men. The "magnified man" theory, as it has been called, is therefore a piece of gross Empiricism, which can be of advantage only to the assailants of Religion.

Faith in God stands to its possessor in the place of knowledge, but it does not thereby become

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knowledge. The ideas in which he clothes his religion cannot be taken by him to convey a positive knowledge of its Object, nor can they be argued from, as containing such knowledge, in controversy with others who are either irreligious, or who clothe their religion in different ideas. The consequence, the immediate consequence, of mistaking these ideas for knowledge (instead of the mere clothing of religion) is what is strictly and properly called *Superstition.*

If, again, we attempt to judge the infinite Whole of Existence directly, and affix either praise or blame to it in its own character, irrespective of a Creator, we are again met by the fact, that, since as a Whole it is known as infinite and eternal, and therefore as beyond any definite and positive knowledge, we are simply judging some finite conception which we ourselves have the power of forming, and not the infinite and eternal Universe, of which we attempt in vain to constitute ourselves the measure. We cannot avoid contemplating the Power which sustains Infinite Existence, neither can we grasp it. We cannot in thought place ourselves outside it, or think of anything else as existent, which is not included in it. The very term *Whole,* when employed in naming infinite existence, must be understood as *eo ipso* purged of the idea of finitude or completeness, which it derives from its applicability to innumerable cases where the thing designated is either the sum, or the organic combination, of a number of finite parts.

The facts, upon which this inability of ours to think of the Universe as complete or finite rests, are facts in elementary experience ; they are, first, that

in experience we always stand at a present moment in time, having a past and a future before and after it, and at a present point in space, having space on all sides round it; and secondly, that both time and space, being continual, extend beyond any limitation which differences in their content may introduce into them. That is to say, in a literal and no merely metaphorical sense, we invariably perceive the Universe from a point within it. The additional perception of what may be called its Unicity as an Existent cannot reverse, indeed it partly pre-supposes, this invariable perception.

What, then, is the final result? We are consciously connected with Infinite Existence in two ways, the way of the speculative and that of the practical reason, the one governed by the necessities of thought, aiming at perfect knowledge, the other by those of thought and emotion together, aiming at a perfect life. Not that these are faculties having separate functions, though functions which mutually support and limit each other, but that the single united stream of conscious life takes either name, from time to time, according as its element of imagery or its element of emotion becomes predominant in it, the whole being subject to the logical laws by which all reason moves.

Now of these two elements, the imagery is the vesture or embodiment of the emotion; whatever we feel, we are compelled to represent and express to our own self-consciousness in some imagery or other; and in all cases of deep emotional feeling, the imagery at our command, and still more the words and phrases which convey it, fall far short of performing their ordinary office,

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and are felt as wholly inadequate vehicles of the emotions which, at such moments, are urgently demanding utterance.

If this be true, as indisputably it is, of emotions arising out of human relations, the relations of human beings to one another, where the known and familiar relations themselves are the imagery of the emotions arising out of them, much more must it be true of emotions arising out of man's relations to the Power which belongs to the unseen as well as to the seen region of Existence, emotions for the embodiment and expression of which the relations of human beings to one another are still the only imagery avaible. For we have necessarily to think, and realise our thought, in terms of positively known relations and imagery, while the emotions, of which those terms are the only vehicle, are felt towards the Eternal and Invisible Power, whom no human imagery can portray.

The imagery and the language of Faith are thus borrowed from the imagery and the language of human relationships, without implying the adequacy of that imagery and language to the emotions which they are employed to realise. We lift our hearts to our Our Father in Heaven, without imagning a human father beyond the visible firmament. Such imagery is necessary in communing with ourselves, because without imagery we cannot think, and this is the only imagery which we have. We ascribe to God, as infinite Power, the human attributes of Self-consciousness, Knowledge, Wisdom, Purity, Justice, Mercy, and Love, because these are the best and highest attributes of which we have experience among and in ourselves; but

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in adding to them, each and all, the qualification *infinite*, we acknowledge to ourselves that the human shape, in which alone we positively know them, is but a feeble adumbration of what they are in Him, that is, in their true but to us unimaginable perfection. Lastly the dictates of our Conscience itself, the source within ourselves from which all our knowledge of the Divine nature flows, we recognise as the often uncertain, often feeble light, which guides our volitions in taking their share in the onward progress of the material world, the whole history of which, from first to last, may prove but an infinitesimal moment in the immeasurable duration of Eternity.

§ 7. The Corner Stones of Ethical Theory.

1 Free-will.

§ 7. I must still solicit the patience of my readers for a few words upon the cardinal points which I have sought to establish as the main foundations of ethical doctrine, and on the truth of which its validity as a practical science depends. These points are four.

1. The first of them is the fact of Free-will, or Freedom in Volition. The fact that we have the power to choose between the adoption of alternative desires is the *sine qua non* condition of moral action and moral responsibility. But the nature of this power cannot be understood without the conception of possibility in the alternatives, considered apart from the determining action of our own deliberation. In other words, the conception of possibility is requisite to legitimate the conception of freedom. Now possibility is one of those conceptions which are called Modals, that is, conceptions of real existence as they are modified by the knowledge (or ignorance) which we have of it. A few words

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therefore, will not be thrown away, in attempting to set in a clear light the place which our conception of free-will holds in the general scheme of logical thought.

In Chapter IV. § 6 of the present Book we saw, that the Modal Conceptions were three, Actuality, Possibility, and Necessity. Simple *de facto* existence is conceived by reference to time alone, as that which either has been, is, or will be. This conception is that of Actuality, the First Modal. Existence conceived otherwise than as simply *de facto* is conceived, first, as that which is possible to be or to have been, or possible not to be or have been; which is Possibility, the Second Modal. But this conception, when referred to any particular thing having a place in the Order of Real Conditioning, becomes the conception of the object referred to as being contingent upon circumstances, that is, as either conditionally necessary or conditionally impossible. These latter conceptions, however, are the two modes of Necessity, the Third Modal, when it also is referred to any particular thing having a place in the Order of Real Conditioning. The two modes of Necessity, taken simply, are the conceptions of that which is either necessary or else impossible to be or have been.

Such are the Modal Conceptions under which we think of everything belonging to the Real Order of Nature, or of Real Conditioning. And it is evident that these conceptions belong solely, as such, to what we have called objective thoughts, as distinguished from the real objects thought of by them, quite irrespective of whether the real object thought of in and by an objective thought is itself

an objective thought or an object which is a real condition, and quite irrespective also of the fact, that an objective thought, or conception by which an object is thought of, is itself a real object belonging to the order of real conditioning.

Now it is with Free-will as a *de facto* reality, that is, as belonging to the Order of Real Conditioning, as distinguished from objective thoughts constituting the Order of Knowing, that we are here concerned. The question before us concerns its reality as defined, that is, the legitimacy of our conception or definition of it as a reality, when brought into connection with our whole scheme of logical thought. Its distinction from our objective logical thought, and its connection with it, must both alike be kept in view.

Moreover it is with Free-will as part of the Order of Real Conditioning while the Order is *in fieri*, or while the process of conditioning and being conditioned is actually going on, that we are here concerned. When this is a conscious process, as it is in volition, alternative possibilities are necessarily involved in the consciousness attending it, because we do not positively know the future, into which we look forward by anticipatory imagination. Real acts of volition are before us, and these consist in either adopting or rejecting some given alternative. To this act and these alternatives it is, that we have now to apply the Modal Conceptions.

A rejected alternative enters the *de facto* Order of Nature only as a desire supported by some motive power, and is thought of as conditionally possible up to the moment of rejection, conditionally impossible after it; an adopted alternative enters it as conditionally possible up to the moment of

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adoption, conditionally necessary after it. The motive power supporting the adopted desire continues to support it, or the consciousness which follows it, after adoption; while the motive power supporting the rejected desire ceases to support it, so that, for the time, it vanishes from consciousness. The act of choice, that is, of adoption or rejection of an alternative, makes the motive power supporting desires become existent as an act of volition in the one case, and prevents its becoming existent as an act of volition in the other. But these are both actual as desires supported by motive power, though not as acts of volition, up to the moment of decision. The same act of volition, defined by the desire which it adopts, is thought of as conditionally possible up to the moment of decision completing it, and as necessary, because actually conditioned, after it; while the alternative volition, defined by the desire or desires rejected, is thought of as conditionally possible up to the moment of decision, and as impossible, because actually precluded, after it. That is to say, the *de facto* reality of acts of volition lies in the acts themselves; and the characterisation of acts of volition as actual, possible, necessary, and impossible, depends on the knowledge we have of them, when thinking of them in relation to the moment of decision which they contain, a knowledge which is different at different stages of their process in becoming completed acts of volition.

It is now I think evident, that this kind of necessity in acts of volition is a very different thing from the really conditioning agency which supports them in becoming actual as volitions. It

is a necessity attaching to objective thought applicable to objects of every kind, and in this case depending on the point of view from which we apprehend the real volitional action thought of, and irrespective of the nature of the agency operative in the action. But it is in and belonging to this really operative or really conditioning agency, that the real freedom of volitional action lies, depending, as we have seen that it does, on the free play of the motive powers supporting alternative desires. On the other hand our *sense* of freedom in volitions depends on our representing alternative volitions as possible up to the moment of decision, so bringing them under the modal conception of possibility. Our *sense* of freedom is part and parcel of our objective thought. The result, then, is briefly this,—one and the same real act of volition is characterised in relation to our knowledge, as possible, as actual, and as necessary, according as we view it before, or in, or after, the moment of actual decision; but this circumstance does not affect the question whether freedom from constraint, in real volitional action, is a reality.

The possible and the contingent, as distinguished from the actual, are thus places, *loci*, in our conception of the Order of Real Conditioning, which our knowledge at any given moment does not compel us to think of as filled by a particular known actual. Similarly with the necessary and the impossible. There is no necessity and no impossibility in the Order of Real Conditioning taken alone. The necessary is any place, in our conception of the Order of Real Conditioning, which our knowledge at a given moment compels us to think of as

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filled in a particular way. The object filling that place we call necessary to exist or be. We may indeed truly say, that, whatever is, necessarily is, or that whatever simply exists is necessary. But when and why can we truly say this? Solely when and because we speak of something assumed or known to exist; and because, in saying that it does exist, we assume a knowledge of its existing. The necessity then predicated is nothing more than the logical Postulate of Identity. It is not a special kind of real existence, as distinguished from real existence simply. It is thus a description of our own knowledge which we give, when we call any existent necessary. The necessity also of general facts, or laws of Nature, is but the record, in knowledge, of the facts themselves, and conditioned on that knowledge.

This is still more plain in the case of the impossible, which is a special case of the necessary. An event or a fact which is impossible never enters the Real Order of Nature at all; our objective thought of it belongs to that Order, but by conceiving the object of it as impossible we merely mark our knowledge that this object has never entered the Real Order of Nature, does not enter it, and never will. We express this knowledge by saying that it is impossible, necessarily excluded, or non-existent except as a failure in an attempt to think.

The simply *de facto* Order of Nature is contradistinguished from the possible or contingent, the necessary, and the impossible, by being referred to time alone, and conceived as existing independently of our having or not having knowledge

of it at the time of its existence; in which of course we make exception of our present knowledge or reasons for knowing that it exists. Here again it is our knowledge which we characterise, when we call anything a *de facto* reality. No assertion is therein made concerning its nature, conditions, or consequences, except so far as some content is taken as a means of denoting it. The only predicate asserted of it is its existence, at some time or other, in the history of the Universe. How it comes to occur in the history of the Universe belongs to a separate enquiry.

We saw above in an earlier Book (Book II. Chap. I. § 10) that a similar statement was true of the conception of Real Conditions, and of the Order of Real Conditioning itself, *eo nomine.* There are no conditions as such in Nature. Conditions and Conditioning are conceptions of ours, by which we interpret, and render intelligible to thought, facts which occur in a certain sequence and collocation. They express facts conceived as if they were affected by our knowledge of their sequences and collocations. Dependence of facts one upon another is the image by which we objectify our conception of real conditioning, and all facts which we have grounds for conceiving as dependent in this way we class under the head of the *conditionally necessary.* Like the *possible,* the *contingent,* the *necessary,* and the *impossible,* so also *Real Conditions, Real Conditioning,* the *Dependent,* and the *Conditionally Necessary,* belong to our way of conceiving certain facts in Nature. No facts in the Real Order of Nature correspond to any of these terms, each to each. They do not mirror a *real*

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conditioning action, or a *real* possibility, contingency, necessity, or impossibility, though at the same time they are true and valid conceptions of the facts of Nature, allowance being made for the known change wrought by the conceiving process. There are no single realities corresponding severally to each of them, any more than there are single realities corresponding to the concepts, or general terms, expressing objects or attributes of objects. Concomitances, sequences, coherences, and combinations of facts, in time and space, are the realities which correspond to the general terms expressing these conceptions, that is, not single entities, such as are commonly suggested by the terms, force, cause, power, agency, causality, and so on, but *the fact that* concomitances, sequences, coherences, and combinations of facts, exist and occur.

The bearing of these remarks on the freedom of volition will be readily apparent, inasmuch as deliberation in choice is one of the processes which determine whether a given act shall or shall not take its place in the Real Order of Nature, or the sequence of what I have called *de facto* facts. When we fallaciously read the modal *necessity* into that Real Order, we render the conception of a free determining action impossible, since the conception of necessity, as a conception, excludes that of possibility or contingency. The question of Free-will must be kept clear from the logomachies founded on this fallacy. That question does not turn on the exemption or non-exemption of free action from the logical and modal conception of Necessity, but on the reality of the fact of self-

determination of the agents, in acts of deliberation and choice, considered as a fact belonging, equally with them, to the real *de facto* order of real conditioning. That this order as a whole, apart from what may be known to be included in it, must be thought of as necessary, and its parts as either conditionally necessary, or possible, or contingent, does not affect the question of freedom. These are considerations which relate to the degree of the knowledge which we may from time to time have of the *de facto* order.

Now in this order, a free action is one, in doing which the agent is self-determined, and neither hindered nor compelled by extraneous forces. An action which is so determined thereby takes its place in the *de facto* order of Nature, and therein falls under the head of the conditionally necessary, namely, when considered in relation to the facts or the agency which determine it, and so brought under the conception, or classed as a case, of uniformity in that order. Actions of this kind are events which contribute to the formation of the conception of uniform Law in Nature, equally with the events and processes in the inorganic kingdom. Both kinds are said to be subject to uniform law, which is a logical conception, and the necessity of which is also logical; but neither are determined by the law, to which they are said to be subject, as if the law itself was among their pre-existent real conditions. To imagine Laws of Nature as pre-existent real conditions, seeing that in reality they are conceptions drawn (so far as they are true from the real events which they are figuratively said to govern, would be to imagine the whole

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future of the real world as itself past and pre-existent.

Most persons, it may reasonably be conjectured, are liable to the illusion of imagining the future of the whole material world as already existing, visibly and tangibly, at the present moment. For they think of that world as something permanent, and consisting of parts which co-exist simultaneously with each other; and the conception of permanence in a collocation of parts leads them to forget the difference between extension in space and duration in time, and to imagine the future duration of time as a permanent extension which is only unknown to them in detail, because as finite beings they have not yet traversed or visited its parts.

But indefinitely great in spatial extension as it is at any present moment, and permanent in duration as it has been up to that present moment, the material world has obviously not yet been permanent for any part of time future. The future is that which has not yet become what by definition it is, namely, *de facto*. At any present moment, *the future*, or that which will be, is a general term of thought, included under the *de facto*, taken as another general term of thought. The illusion consists in hypostasising these general terms, and so imagining the future as already past and present, and therefore as contributing its quota of forces to its own determination and evolution out of the really existent material world. But if we picture the evolution of the material world from the past, through the present, into the future, by a line of space, which is probably the way in which the

illusion arises, then we must also picture it as advancing along that line, like a wave of indefinite but enormous volume, which at any present moment has entirely empty space before it, into which it must be pictured as advancing. This at least is the view which we are logically compelled to take, so long as we are restricted, as we are restricted in thinking of ourselves as forward-looking agents, and of our own actions as expecting their completion, to adopt the distinction of Time into Past, Present, and Future, as the basis or framework of our thought. It is to Omniscience alone, that what to us is future can be the immediate object of an ever-present knowledge.

The bearing of this again on the question of Free-will will be evident. For in the first place, every portion of the volume of the real wave contributes its quota to the determination of the next advance to be made; and the action of the whole volume is entirely unfettered by anything not contained in itself; it is wholly and completely *free*. What we call Laws of Nature are the events or facts of the evolution determined by that free action, when they are described in general terms or formulas. And then in the next place, if it can be shown that any special portions of the whole have the same attribute of freedom which the whole has, namely, that of being unfettered by the surrounding portions, and having their action determined by the play of forces within themselves, then, and to the extent to which this is the case, those portions will be strictly free agents. But this is precisely what has been shown in the case of the cerebral organs and neural actions which subserve

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conscious volitions. In other words, human volitions are free actions, which is what is meant when we say, that men are normally free agents, or that they are endowed with Free-will.

2. The second corner stone of Ethic is the conception of the real and actual motive force in volitional actions, in contradistinction from the law of right and wrong, that is, from the direction which the motive force *ought to* take, in order to be in conformity to that law. There is in all living organisms a vigorous tendency, *nisus*, or *conatus*, to preserve and develop their existence in accordance with their nature, or as it may be called, to continue the functioning of their structure. This tendency is, in living organisms, what the *vis insita*, or *vis inertiæ*, is in inorganic matter. It is their tendency to continuance or self-preservation, and in conscious beings is attended with a sense of pleasure, attaching to it simply as an exercise of natural activities, and quite distinct from the more specific pleasures, not to speak of pains, attaching to the particular modes in which it is exercised, or due to the activities upon which it operates; as I endeavoured to set forth in Section 2, when speaking of Motives as distinguished from Reasons. It is in fact the feeling of our own activity or of Self as active, (both the feeling of Self and that of its activity being feelings really conditioned by the Subject), the self-feeling which comes home to us, as it were, with a sense of reality, as distinguished from what we call Self-knowledge, which is given by the awareness of definite acts of choice and volition.

This pleasurable self-feeling or love of life, which

attaches to the necessary activity of self-preservation, is normally ineradicable in all sentient beings. At the same time it is widely different from selfishness. It may combine with the pleasure which we feel in the promotion of any specific purpose or interest, so as to form in union with it a single complex feeling. It becomes selfishness when it combines habitually with one set of feelings or interests only, namely, those which aim at the gratification of the unsympathetic desires, with disregard of those which are gratified by promoting or witnessing the welfare of other persons. The object of selfishness is the whole concrete Subject, with all its desires and aims, as distinguished, and indeed empirically separate, from other persons considered in the same concrete way; and the activity so governed is invariably and truly reckoned a vice. The self-feeling on the other hand, taken by itself alone, or merely as evidence of the motive power in the organism, is indifferent to good and bad, to right and wrong. It becomes the one or the other, according to the specific feelings with which it combines, or what is the same thing, the specific directions into which it is guided.

Now self-preservation, which runs through the whole physical world, organic and inorganic, and in sentient beings is attended by the self-feeling just spoken of, which in fact is their awareness of what continuing to exist means, has been most truly called the First Law of Nature. But for the very reason that it is a law of Nature, it is not a Law of Morals. All moral laws are expressions of what *ought to be*, not of what *is*. The First Law of Morals is not self-preservation, but self-identifica-

tion with Conscience,—that willing identification of Self with Conscience commanding the right, and looking forwards to Eternity, which is itself identical with love to God.

But this being true of self-preservation and the self-feeling which attends it, the same is also true of all feelings which are, for the time being, combined with or included in that activity and its accompanying feeling of pleasure. To follow them is to follow Happiness, or Pleasure in the widest sense of the term, and to avoid pain or unhappiness. This pursuit (including the corresponding avoidance) is also a law of Nature, not of Morals. It is not evitable by any man; we cannot help doing it; that activity of the organism which is accompanied by the consciousness of seeking pleasure and avoiding pain is part and parcel of our physical constitution. But though it is thus a law of Nature and not of Morals, it is yet the necessary pre-supposition and groundwork of moral action, the general law of which, as moral, is a law of Choice, speaking through Conscience, a law which guides free choice by its criterion of right and wrong, a law which really operates in virtue of the special physical activity supporting the process of deliberation, of the meaning and value of which it is itself the evidence.

Morality therefore requires, not that the active tendency of Nature, by which we seek pleasure and avoid pain, should be suppressed, but that the pleasures which attend its exercise should be made to conform to, and so become identical with, those which are commanded by the moral law of Conscience, and that the natural pleasure-seeking

activity should become an activity in complete union with that law. The motive power of self-interest is to be preserved, and the self-interest, which is its evidence, identified with love to God as the first precept of the Moral Law. Between true self-interest and the love of God antagonism is impossible.

Of no other ultimate aim or purpose in life can the same be said. It cannot be said of love to other human beings, or to mankind at large, when either of these is taken as the ultimate aim in life, which is the case in several forms of Eudæmonism. Love to our neighbour follows as a consequence from love to God, because the latter excludes selfishness, and in virtue of that relation has the motive of true self-interest to support it. Taken as an ultimate end, it is supported by the sympathetic affections only, and is therefore in antagonism to the larger, and usually the more powerful part of an individual's motives, namely, the whole range of his self-regarding interests, the suppression of which, supposing it were possible, would involve an enormous loss of motive power. Philanthropy which, following the lead of Auguste Comte, it has become the fashion to call Altruism, is at best but a feeble substitute, when it is taken as a substitute, for the Moral Law. Not to mention, that it is impossible to see, why Happiness should have a greater moral value, or moral claim to our obedience, when we think of it as the happiness of others, than when we think of it as our own. When Utilitarians insist, that one man is as good as another, in point of being a claimant for happiness, we need not credit them with the Irishism of

adding,—'and a deal better too.' Changing the persons for whom happiness is sought cannot invest it with a moral validity, which is lacking to it as happiness simply, though it may easily enfeeble its efficacy as a motive power.

The moral law of Conscience, on the other hand, with its first and all-including precept, Love to God, enlists or may enlist in its service the whole motive energy of the individual. A place is found for the self-regarding as well as for the sympathetic instincts and emotions. The whole force of self-love, or the love of life, as distinguished from selfishness, when once it is disciplined by conscience, is guided into directions, before which the vista of an endless futurity is laid open. The motive power continues the same, but the objects of its pursuit are changed. Hopes and fears for eternity are partly substituted for, partly overshadow and transform, hopes and fears relating to the seen world only. Man becomes a citizen of the infinite and eternal Universe, a citizenship of which death is no longer conceived as the termination.[1]

It is perhaps humiliating to the pride of man, that he should require the stimulation of self-interest, of hopes and fears for himself, to enable him to obey the voice of Conscience. He would doubtless prefer to conceive, that in himself alone in his own enlightened Reason, and his own stedfast Will, he possessed the self-sufficing energy to move forward unswervingly on the path of duty,

[1] On this aspect of the subject more especially see the late Principal J. C. Shairp's Essay, *The Moral Motive Power*, republished in his *Studies in Poetry and Philosophy*, 2nd edit. Edinb. 1872,—an Essay which, though popularly written, yet from its true insight and grasp of the subject as a whole, I have long thought of permanent and distinctive value.

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and thereby rise superior both to temptation and to calamity. This is the proud ideal of the Stoic, but this is not the teaching of experience, nor consistent with the truth of analysis. Normally men do require the motive power of self-interest to sustain their efforts in doing what they know to be right. And we know as a fact, that it can and often does sustain them, so long as the hoped for pleasures and the hoped for immunity from pains are not themselves made the chief end or object of pursuit, or the pursuit of them substituted for that obedience to the Moral Law, to which the imagination of them is properly subservient. Justly, therefore, is Humility held in Christian Ethic to be an essential feature in morality. The motive power, which under the guidance of conscience enables us to aspire to heaven, is the same as that to which we owe our being and continuance as physical organisms. This is the Law of Nature, to which man is subject as a material, though conscious, agent.

§ 3. Conscience.

3. The third corner stone of Ethical theory is the doctrine of Conscience, including the Criterion by which it pronounces on the morality of actions, namely, the idea or law of Anticipated Harmony in the character of the agent. Little need here be added to what has been already said at so much length on this point, all-essential as it is. The place and function of the criterion of conscience will have been made sufficiently clear by the constant reference to it in what has now been said of Free-will and Motive Power, with which it stands at once in connection and contrast. It is primarily in the deliberation which precedes acts

of choice that the voice of conscience is heard, and its criterion applied. It is a normal function of the cerebral organisation, and its exercise, like that of other normal functions, is attended with pleasurable self-feeling. It is reflective perception having immanent volitions as its object. As an active cerebral function it wields or brings to bear, at any given moment, no more power than is evidenced by the attractiveness of the perception of harmony in the character, though it is also true, that the tendency to harmonise is at once the most comprehensive in its range, and the most deeply seated and permanent, among all the tendencies of volitional, intellectual, and imaginative life. The main part of the power to act, at any moment of choice, in accordance with that perception comes, as already said, from the motive power evidenced by self-interest, which the power underlying conscience directs and enforces by bringing into view the sanctions of eternity, sanctions which are included in the idea of that Harmony which it employs as its criterion of right and wrong.

In addition to the fact, presently to be recalled to notice, that our awareness of conscience judging is normally inseparable from our awareness of the volitions which it judges, it is to the fact that the thought of Eternity is included in the Criterion, that the motive power which the particular dictates of conscience possess, as compared to the motive power of Inclinations and Passions, is principally due. It is by this thought that it exerts a constant, though comparatively silent, pressure upon choice. The more we reflect upon our actions, the less capable we become of disregarding the

immeasurable importance with which this thought invests the decisions to which we come; I mean the immeasurable importance which we then perceive them to possess, for our own eternal interests, in a prudential point of view, on the supposition of a future life beyond the grave, the possibility of which is not capable of positive disproof. At the same time, the thought of Eternity, while it exercises this constant prudential pressure, also brings before us in a practical shape the sense of irreversible validity in the judgments of conscience, inasmuch as it excludes the possibility of any conception transcending or overriding the criterion. It is in this way that the thought of Eternity, the *sensus infiniti* as it has been called, involved in the ethical criterion, forms at once the link of union and the point of transition between religion and morality.

One more point which is of primary importance must here be expressly noted. It is this, that the criterion of conscience is no mere answer to the question, What is right?, as if the idea of moral right was previously known and familiar. If that were so, it might then be fairly argued, as it must logically be argued by Eudæmonists, that the idea of moral right is nothing more than a common-sense notion, equivalent to the idea of the greatest happiness, or highest degree of expediency, and, if contradistinguished from that idea, is a fiction. The truth of the matter is widely different from this. Conscience, with its criterion derived from the idea of an anticipated harmony, is a mode of reflective perception, having immanent acts of choice as its object. It is an ultimate mode

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of consciousness, and as such is the source of the idea of moral right and wrong, not merely the perception of what actions fall under either head, the idea of both being pre-supposed. The idea of a Harmony in immanent actions, and therefore of a right or a wrong in every particular action, is an element in our immediate experience of immanent acts, when once their nature as acts has been objectified in perception. The idea itself has its source in immediate experience, and cannot be treated as a gloss put by common sense upon the idea of the greatest happiness or expediency. It is an idea inseparable from the functioning of all self-conscious activities.

Its place in those activities is co-ordinate and parallel with the idea, that all truths must be consistent with one another, in speculative reasoning, and is of equal validity. The consciousness expressed by the latter idea, which is involved in all speculative reasoning, is the source of the idea of Truth; that expressed by the Anticipated Harmony of Ethic, by which practical reasoning moves, which is reasoning about volition in its volitional character, is the source of the idea of Moral Right and Wrong. The difference is, that the idea of consistency between truths guides thought which is directed to discover what is, has been, or will be, that is, *de facto* or necessary existence, while the Harmony of the Criterion guides thought which is directed to discover what ought to be, and therefore relates to future, possible, and contingent existence. Hence it is that the harmony is said to be anticipated. It could not otherwise be the guide to practice moving forward into futurity.

But in point of immediateness to consciousness, and in point of validity as an idea, the parallel with the idea of consistency in truths is complete. For this also is an expression of a law of Harmony, but of one considered as prevailing only in the region of *de facto* existence and its necessary consequences.

4. The True Character.

4. The fourth and last of the fundamental conceptions of Ethic is that of the True Character of the conscious agent, which may be popularly called the True Self, the establishment of which is a corollary from the former three. Strictly speaking, as we have seen, the *Self* means conscience as a mode of consciousness, with abstraction from the cerebral action supporting it. But this is not the sense in which it is commonly understood. In ordinary language it means the self-conscious agent, as known by what he feels, thinks, and does, that is, by what is properly designated as his Character, the nature or *whatness* of the whole conscious being as an agent. The question is, in what does the true character of the agent consist, as distinguished on the one hand from his ideal, on the other from his real, character?

Now the character of the agent is always *in fieri*, that is, in process of formation, during his whole life, from the dawn of volition onwards, a process which is still incomplete when interrupted by death. Nevertheless the forming and perfecting, so far as possible, of a certain character is, we have already seen, the great End of right action, and as an end it is the realisation of some ideal. The actual realisation of that character which is the ideal necessarily set up by the judgments of conscience

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4. The True Character.

in individuals, however otherwise different they, and consequently their true ideals, may be, is that which alone can properly be called their true character.

But the true character, so defined, is equally *in fieri*, or in process of formation, during the whole life of the agent, as his character taken simply. The former process differs from the latter only in point of the ideal, of which it is the realisation. Characters are formed by volitions. And the character actually formed by volitions, irrespective of ideals, is that which alone can properly be called the real character. There is a profound difference between the real and the ideal in character, and still more between the real and that special ideal of harmony in character, to which the judgments of conscience give birth. It follows, that the True Character, or popularly speaking the True Self, being necessarily both ideal and real, consists in the actual identification of the real with the true ideal; or in other words, is a character in which the ideal harmony, proposed as an end by conscience, is being ever continually, and more and more, realised. The true ideal of harmony in character includes the circumstance, that all actual volitions shall be in harmony with, and tend to realise, that ideal.

The phenomenon of a character at variance with itself is frequent and familiar. It constantly occurs, that within the cerebral organisation of one and the same Subject there are several trains of volitions, which have formed and are continuing to form indurated habits or fixed modes of action, each train being in unity and consistency with

itself, but standing in incompatible and exclusive antagonism to other trains; so that each takes, as it were, possession of the Subject in succession, and then gives place to another. One and the same Subject thus seems to consist not of one but of several different and antagonistic characters, or popularly speaking Selves, each of which in turn appears to the Subject as *Himself*, in virtue of the unity of consciousness connected by memory, which is the widest sense in which the term Self is used. And thus, whatever interest is uppermost, or in other words, whatever distinct train of volitions is in possession, that interest and the train of volitions which adopt it the Subject will feel himself *to be*, or will identify with Himself, during the period of its domination. The question is, Can any of these be held to be his True Self, and, if any, which must it be?

The answer depends on the consideration, that union, or harmony of coherent elements, is the essential characteristic of all real existents, as we have seen both in the case of consciousness, and and in that of Matter. Now of all the trains of volition which may exist in alternation or succession, within the same Subject possessing unity of consciousness, there is but one which can so modify an antagonistic train as to bring it into harmony with itself. It is that train of volitions, whatever it may otherwise be, which is itself governed by the moral law of conscience. All volitions whatever are necessarily subjected to the supervision of conscience, since this, as we have seen, is consciousness itself having volitions for its object, all volitions being conscious actions. No

single volition to disregard or disobey conscience can totally silence it; for to be conscious of such a volition is to be aware of the voice which it would silence. And if we suppose any train or trains of volition to have become so habitual as to form fixed habits or modes of action, and in that shape to stifle all questioning reflection for long periods together, still they contain no guarantee that conscience will not at last revive, or in other words that they will not at last become the objects of self-conscious perception and judgment.

The volition to obey conscience must therefore be in permanent, though possibly not continuous, antagonism to all volitions which would disregard it, just as different trains of these volitions are in temporary antagonism to one another. And therefore no real and permanent unity of character is possible, except by bringing volitions of every kind into subordination to the dictates of conscience, the guiding principle of which is harmony itself. The True Character, or popularly speaking the True Self, may accordingly be defined as that permanent volitional agency which is in conscious harmony with the Moral Law. No ethical self-unity in the Subject as a whole is possible on any other terms.

Yet it is just here that self-deception is most easy and most rife, even with those who most fully recognise the paramount authority of conscience. Every one is prone to take his ideal character or self, in which of course the true ideal character which is the ideal of conscience is included, as his real character or self, oblivious of the question, whether it is in course of being actually realised or not by his actual volitions. He mistakes, not the

will, but the idea of the will, for the deed, which is the will itself. The point of practical importance for all moral conduct is, not only to recognise and approve what is right, but actually to choose it in immanent volition; or in other words, to *make* our real character or self accord with its own true ideal. A man's True Character, or Self, is that ethical self-unity, and that alone, in which the *de facto* and the *de jure* existence of his volitions are combined in intimate union, however feeble the vitality of that union may be; and to know and feel and decree that union as Himself is the indispensable condition of all conscious pursuit of his true interests. No other unity constitutes his Personality as an individual, moral, and self-conscious being.

END OF BOOK III.

THE METAPHYSIC OF EXPERIENCE.

BOOK IV.

THE REAL UNIVERSE.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONSTRUCTIVE BRANCH OF PHILOSOPHY.

§ 1. Construction based on Analysis.

§ 1. The strictly analytical part of my task has been completed in the three foregoing Books. The analysis of those perceptions or modes of consciousness, the combination of which gives us the complex perception of the world of Matter, a world of physical Real Conditions, was contained in Book I. The analysis of the operations of Matter, or of physical real conditions, their forces and laws, both in the organic and inorganic kingdom, and the connection between those of the organic kingdom and consciousness, as their dependent concomitant, were the subjects treated of in Book II., in reliance for the most part upon well recognised scientific authorities. And again in Book III. were submitted to analysis the associations and dissociations of states or process-contents of consciousness, including the emotions which arise in them, and the perceptions which we obtain of them as active or volitional processes; the whole in close connection with, and in reference to, the physical organic processes upon which they proximately depend.

In this way has been obtained (1) an analysis of all the essential and representative parts of consciousness or experience in its whole extent, in

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respect both of its varied contents and of its processes, volitional as well as spontaneous, and (2) a definite conception of the nature and scope, the principles and the range, of the Positive Sciences on the one hand, which gather up and include all that we know, or may in the future come to know, of the Order of Nature considered as a *de facto* Order, and of the Sciences of Practice on the other, which treat of the principles and ideas in accordance with which Man aims at determining his own character and shaping his own history, thereby also modifying to some extent the Order of Nature, considered as modifiable in the future, of which he knows himself to be a part.

The strictly analytical portion of my task being thus completed, it remains for me so to gather up and combine the results reached in the course of it, as to show what conclusions they warrant with regard to that whole which we call the Universe of Things; or, as it may be expressed, to present a reasoned Conspectus or Rationale of it in relation to ourselves; seen, that is, as we must see it, from our human point of view, and subject to human limitations. Blanks of ignorance there will of necessity be in any such conspectus, blanks occurring whenever we can put real (not merely formal) questions which we cannot answer, or are sensible of the absence of a desired knowledge; or in other words, wherever we have reason to suppose, that absence of knowledge is due either to the absence of appropriate powers of feeling or cognition in ourselves, or to the limited energy of the powers which we have. Nevertheless it is just such a conspectus or rationale, infinitesimal as the amount

of its positive content must be, compared with the Universe of Things, the infinitude of which is represented by the blanks in the conspectus, which, as I understand it, is and has always been the particular aim and purpose distinctive of Philosophy.

Or, to vary the expression of the same thing, it remains for me, first, to complete that objective panorama of our knowledge which has already been spoken of in connection with the real order of physical Nature, by taking up into and harmonising with it those further results which have been obtained by the analysis of practical action, and then, secondly, to draw such inferences as it may appear to warrant concerning the real order of Nature, or the Universe, as a whole, of which it is, as it were, a panoramic representation or ideal picture. The whole sphere of our positive knowledge, which includes a knowledge of the *de facto* order of Nature and of our own efforts to modify it, and which is our representative picture or panorama of the real order, both as actual and as possible, or in other words as an aggregate of Real Existents in the fullest sense of the term, alike in the past, the present, and the future, will thus be presented in outline as a systematic whole; and at the same time the places will be indicated, at which its boundary (to speak figuratively) is not continuous, or its volume not self-contained; places, therefore, at which it betrays a dependence of the reality which it positively represents upon the reality which it does not positively represent, but includes in the form, as it were, of blanks penetrating or possibly surrounding

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the positively represented parts of its all-embracing panorama.

Such a rationale or conspectus of the whole Universe of Reality, as already said, it has always been the aim and purpose of Philosophy to present, of course with as near an approach to completeness as human means of knowledge would allow. But in tracing back the history of philosophy as we now have it to its origins, which for us belong to Greek antiquity, we find that it was not at first distinguished and kept apart from its analytical foundations. I mean that it was not distinctly perceived, either in what respects philosophy and its departments specifically differed from any department or departments of positive science, or that, as so distinct, it necessarily itself consisted of two distinct branches, analytical and constructive, the latter of which followed as a result or corollary of the former.

This second character was unnoticed even by him who was the first to give definite shape and consistency to philosophy as a separate pursuit, in contradistinction from positive science, and from whom our modern ideas of it have principally been derived, I mean Aristotle. In that most valuable though not finally revised treatise, in which the essentials of philosophy are brought before us, Aristotle identifies his *First Philosophy*, or *Theology*, that is to say, his constructive conspectus of the Universe as a whole, with the analytical inquiry into τὸ ὂν ᾗ ὄν, καὶ τὰ τούτῳ ὑπάρχοντα καθ' αὑτό, that is to say, into Being *qua* Being, and its essential properties; or as it may also be rendered, the Existent *qua* Existent, and what its existence

involves. The suggestion, that the unfinished treatise, in which this was done, was found headed or labelled with the title Μετὰ τὰ φυσικά, as a direction to the editor, may readily be accepted to account for the coinage of the term *Metaphysic*, and for its application to First Philosophy or Theology, as being concerned, generally speaking, with one and the same object-matter. The introduction of the new name would thus seem due to a fortunate accident, not to any perception that a new name was needed. It does not seem to have been perceived, that, new name or not, two essentially different aims, involving essentially different methods, were in danger of being identified, the one analytical or aiming at an analysis, the other constructive or aiming at a construction, and therefore dependent upon the results of a previous analysis.

Yet in reality it was not to be expected, that any satisfactory final result should be obtained, so long as this wrongful identification was retained unperceived. For thereby, to mention no other reason, the possible inadequacy of human powers to picture or cognise the infinite Universe of Being was dropped out of view, or in other words, the assumption of their adequacy thereto was tacitly made, without first ascertaining whether, and in what limited sense if any, the fact of that adequacy could be maintained. The whole subject was thus kept involved in great and unnecessary obscurity.

For a theory of the infinite Universe had been sketched, namely, that it contained, and was in some sense ordered and governed by, Divine Self-conscious Intelligence (Νόησις Νοήσεως), the gover-

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nance, though not the creation, of the visible and material parts of it taking place by way, not of efficient, but of final or teleological, causation, that is, by means of a tendency implanted in the different classes of material existents to aim at perfection, in the sense of acting in the most perfect manner of which their several natures were capable. And yet it had not been made clear, how the action of final causes, that is, of desire aiming at purpose, even supposing it a reality in the action of conscious beings, could without fallacy be employed to explain the action of physical agents, in which its essential condition, consciousness, was apparently wanting. The theory thus sketched, or perhaps we should say merely suggested, appears in consequence as a simple reflex of the powers and capacities of human beings, thrown back upon, or read back into, the infinite Universe, by way of interpreting and explaining it.

It is not needful here to follow the subsequent stages in the history and development of this theory of the Universe. Virtually and in essentials, it, or its successor, still occupied the same, or no better, position, and was open to the same or similar objections, when Kant, noticing the fact but misinterpreting its causes, owing to the arbitrary assumption, which is fundamental in his system, that the distinction between Subject and Object could be taken as an ultimate datum in knowledge, both insisted that all philosophy must be preceded by a Critical Examination of the Subject's powers, that is, by a Theory of Knowledge, or *Erkenntniss-theorie*, and then, in consequence of that critical examination, assigned a special province to Meta-

physic, by conceiving it as a science (real or pretended) derived from and treating of pure conceptions of the Subject's understanding, and pure ideas of the Subject's reason. He then showed without difficulty, that such a science must in fact be vain and nugatory, inasmuch as it led to self-contradictory conclusions, when systematised apart from possible human experience, though consisting of conceptions and ideas, without which human experience would be impossible. This result was, *prima facie* at least, both to surrender all claim on the part of philosophy to possess any knowledge of the real Universe, by restricting whatever knowledge it possessed to be knowledge only of its appearance to human consciousness mediated by human capacities, and also thereby to identify philosophy with the psychology of the human Subject.

But an assumption had been involved in taking up this position of surrender, which of itself transformed it into the opposite position of unqualified claim. I mean the assumption, that the human conscious Subject was a real factor in experience; a piece of knowledge tacitly held to be self-evident, and therefore to need no deriving from experience by means of analysis. Granted the existence of a cognising agent, human or other, (and who would dream of denying it?), and then what part, what element, or what whole of knowledge, might not be attributed to its agency alone?

Accordingly in the hands of Kant's disciples there followed the development and transformation of Kant's own Critical Theory of Knowledge (a system which Kant originally intended only as a

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preliminary to philosophy) into a Theory of Knowledge in general, purged of the inadequacy due to imagined human limitations, and made coincident with a Theory of Existence, or in other words erected into a substantive Philosophy of the Universe. This transformation culminated in the Absolute Philosophy of Hegel, a gorgeous cloudland in which Absolute Reality is supposed to be at once identical with the activity of Thought and generated by it; a system exhibiting, as it were, the *Causa Sui et Mundi* in the very act, or supratemporal process, of causing the Universe and Itself; or, as it might be expressed, detecting the law of Aristotle's Divine Self-conscious Intelligence, or Νόησις Νοήσεως, in actual operation.

Now it is on assumptions of any and every kind that all genuine philosophy makes war. The assumption of agency in experience, thought, or consciousness, is no exception, nor is the assumption of human Subjects of human experience an exception, nor even the assumption of Divine agency and knowledge. Experience must be made by analysis to show the meaning, and yield the justification, of all these terms; that is, experience must justify the assumption of realities corresponding to them, if they are to be justified at all. The necessity of insisting on this doctrine has been brought out, during the present century, by Hegelianism following Kantianism, in a more striking manner than ever before. Experience is that on which we take our stand, whether it tells us much or little, and whatever be the proportion between that which it reveals and that which it indicates as unrevealable. The basis of all sound knowledge

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must therefore consist of experience analysed without assumptions, postponing theory and construction, until such time as a sufficient body of facts has been established by repeated analysis.

In my conception of Metaphysic, as my readers already know, it means the Analysis of Experience, the strictly analytical part of the whole of Philosophy; the Construction of its results into a single comprehensive view, a construction in strict dependence on the analysis, being the remaining and complementary part. Experience, it is true, cannot be transcended, but experience may itself include a knowledge, first, that there are instances of it in which subjective perception and objective reality, though distinguishable, coincide, as in seeing and handling visible and tangible matter; secondly, that it has *lacunæ* and limits, and why it is so; and also thirdly, to what parts of itself, which consist of positive knowlege, both the *lacunæ* and the limits stand more directly related. To ascertain these points, by reference to the foregoing analysis, is the purpose of what I have ventured to call the Constructive Branch of Philosophy. It would thus correspond to the old Aristotelian First Philosophy or Theology, after deduction of all strictly analytical knowledge from it. Some relations of the positively unknown to the positively known may, in fact, be inferred from the knowledge of the latter, being involved in the very knowledge which we have of its incompleteness; and these relations are the object-matter of the Constructive Branch.

In consequence of this change, First Philosophy or Theology no longer stands at the beginning, or serves as the basis, of Philosophy, in the order of

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reasoned knowledge, in virtue of being (as was supposed) the science of the First Principles necessarily involved in all Being, but comes at the end and completion of it; the foundations being laid in analysis of actual experience, of the kind known as human, and analysis being the first step taken in acquiring a reasoned knowledge of that experience as a whole. Analysis is necessarily and in all cases the first thing to be done in every genuine enquiry; that is, we must begin by noticing and ascertaining the phenomena into which we are about to enquire. And in the case of Philosophy, the experience which is its *analysandum* presents itself, as we have seen, not in its simplest shape, but in the shape of an already formed world of persons and things, actions and events, in short as what we have called common-sense and empirical experience. It is analysis alone which justifies the conceptions, not only of Subject and Object, but even of subjective and objective aspects in the process-content of experience itself. It is analysis alone which justifies the conception, that a construction of its own results is possible, or indicates the directions in which it may legitimately be undertaken. The constructive result is the harvest, not the seed, of the analysis. This change of position on the part of First Philosophy or Theology, from the first place to the last, from the foundation to the crown of the building,—or rather, more accurately, the restriction of these titles to the second or constructive branch of the whole of Philosophy, the term *Metaphysic* being reserved for the first or analytical branch,—this change and this restriction mark the surrender and disappear-

ance of the last vestige of *a priori* assumptions in philosophy.

§ 2. The Conspectus of Reality.

§ 2. It may seem absurd at first sight to speak at all of Man's conspectus or rationale of the Universe of Things, so vast, so immeasurable, is the disproportion between the infinitesimal spot, covered by his positive knowledge, and the Universe of which he is said to have a conspectus. As well might a mole's experience of the soil in which it burrows be called magniloquently its conspectus of the solar system; at least so it seems at first sight. Indeed, so far as magnitudes only are concerned, the advantage is with the mole. For what is unknown by the mole is by supposition finite, what is unknown by man is infinite, and is known by him to be so. But the relative magnitudes of the known and the unknown are not alone in question, in either case. The points which justify and render indispensable the terms in question, notwithstanding their seeming incongruity, are two; first the continuity of the infinite unknown with the finite known, secondly, the knowledge of this continuity on the part of the knower. Man has the idea of infinite existence, and the knowledge that this infinite existence, though its content be positively unknown to him, is an infinite reality, and continuous with that reality of which he has a positive knowledge. His idea of infinity enables him to embrace both the known and the unknown in a single conspectus or panoramic thought. The seeming absurdity of the term arises from our thoughts being habitually concerned with finite and mostly discontinuous magnitudes. For by this habit we are involuntarily led to read into such terms as *conspectus* and

rationale a claim to convey a positive knowledge of all the several parts of that to which they are applied as a whole, and which they thus present to the imagination as finite. It is this falsely supposed claim, with its false suggestion of finitude, which gives them that momentary appearance of absurdity, when applied to the infinite Universe. The terms themselves, or their equivalents, apart from this involuntary illusion, express plain facts of experience, and are indispensable as a means of recording and conveying them.

But it may perhaps be said, in taking up this position, and asserting that we have the idea of an infinite reality, and the knowledge that this infinite reality, where positively unknown to us, is yet continuous with that finite reality of which we have a positive knowledge, am I not again making Kant's assumption, notwithstanding my repudiation of it, and of the consequences to which it necessarily leads? And if so, are not in fact, and also on my own showing, both that assumption and those its necessary consequences alike necessary and unavoidable, in any system of philosophical thought? A few words must be devoted in reply to both these objections. Neither is my present position a return to Kant's, nor is Kant's position with its consequences, nor are those consequences taken independently, a philosophical necessity. To take the latter points first.

From the time of Aristotle to that of Kant a change, distinct from simple increase of analytical knowledge, had been steadily going on within philosophical thought, differentiating it from thought which was simply scientific, a change assigning to

it the enquiry into our knowledge of things, as distinguished from enquiry into things taken as already to some extent known, and thus giving it a subjective as distinguished from an objective, or rather empirical, character. Philosophy shared with science the necessity of having an analytical foundation, but it was differentiated from science by its subjective character, that is, by the fact that knowing, as distinguished from things known, except where these were themselves process-contents of consciousness, was its special object-matter and *analysandum*. The *Cogito ergo sum* of Descartes is the utterance which is generally adduced as marking the first decisive recognition of this subjective character in philosophy, though its first decisive recognition was, of course, far from being its complete and fully comprehended establishment.

What is meant by its complete and fully comprehended establishment is, that knowing, consciousness, experience, *per se*, or as distinguished from things mediately known, perceived, experienced, by means of them, are taken as the object-matter or *analysandum* of philosophy, without assuming to begin with (as is the case in common-sense or empirical thought), either that they inhere in real Subjects, or that they refer to real Objects, or that they are themselves real powers or agencies. For to make these, or any equivalent assumptions, would plainly be to abandon the completely subjective character of philosophy, by bringing its object-matter into relation with something already known, or supposed to be known, independently of it. Nor is there any difference between the three assumptions named, in this respect. A real power

or agency is just as much an inferred or mediately known reality, as a real Subject, or a real Object, and the initial assumption of it, therefore, equally illegitimate. Plainly also we can attend to and analyse knowing, consciousness, or experience, without making any assumption with regard to the possibility or the conditions of what we are then doing, or of the object-matter which we are analysing. Now instead of simply analysing knowing, consciousness, or experience, Kant's initial assumption was, that they inhered in real but transcendental Subjects; and Hegel's, to which it necessarily led, was, that they themselves were real agencies.[1] Both assumptions aimed at getting, so to speak, behind knowing, consciousness, or experience, *per se*, and showing how their nature and their genesis might be explained, as if they on the one hand were originally given as an object-matter, and we on the other had the ideas of nature and genesis independently of their content, and prior to that content being given to us.

Now it is on the completely and distinctively subjective character of philosophy, which both Kant and Hegel, in my opinion, disregard quite as decisively as Reid, that I take my stand, and on that ground I assert, both that agents and agency are objects of inference, not immediately found in knowing, consciousness, or experience, *per se*, and also that the immediate content of these latter is such as both implicitly to contain the idea of infinite and eternal existence, and also to necessitate

[1] The third assumption mentioned, namely, that they refer to real Objects, I pass over as not concerning us in this place. It is the assumption on which Reidian or Common-sense Realism, as it is called, is based.

the inference of infinite and eternal power or agency; all power or agency being an object of inference, as well in finite as in infinite and eternal existents. It cannot, then, I think, be said, that either Kant's or Hegel's position is necessary; nor can it be said, that mine is identical with either. Mine is neither, like pure Kantianism, a Theory of Knowledge, based on a transcendental psychology, which involves the assumption of so-called Things-in-themselves, nor is it, like pure Hegelianism, a Theory of Creative Thought, the idea of which has literally no warrant in experience. It is an account of what we must rationally think of that Real Universe, of which experience, strictly examined, shows us that we are real and conscious, though finite and, except to ourselves, highly insignificant members.

We are, in fact, spectators not makers of Nature. We have no absolute knowledge; we have no knowledge of absolute Being; nor can we frame the idea of any save phenomenal Being or Existence. Certain data, for instance the qualities of simple sensation and feeling, the formal elements of time-duration and spatial extension, inseparable from all or some of them, and the reflective character of consciousness itself, are for us ultimate; that is, are alike inexplicable and unquestionable. It is the reflective character of consciousness which compels us to think of all Being or Existence as phenomenal, in compelling us to define it, in its utmost generality, by the one essential attribute of perceivability. There is nothing to show why or how consciousness is a process, or has a content, of this sort. And the very ideas of *why* and of *how*,

and *of this sort*, and *of that sort*, arise only in that process, having that content, which for us are ultimate data.

A philosophy which should really explain these ultimate data might, perhaps, fairly claim to have given a meaning to the term *absolute*, and to be itself an absolute philosophy. But even supposing such a philosophy to be possible, its very absoluteness would be its apotheosis; it would not be a philosophy, it would be omniscience. No such philosophy is ours. It is plain that experience may as a fact be limited, without our having any perception either of the fact, or of the nature or incidence of the limitation, until we have learnt from experience what *limitation* means, by seeing particular instances of it within experience itself. And it is by a similar consideration that the truth as well as the meaning of the fact is established, that by *experience*, taken simply, no other than human experience can possibly be intended, notwithstanding that, when we think of it as human we think of it as limited, instead of as the unlimited parent of limitation; this consideration being, that then, standing on distinctions disclosed by experience itself, we *ipso facto* cease considering it solely in its nature as a knowing, and pass to the consideration of it as a particular existent, the object of psychology, dependent on some particular living organism for its genesis and history; on which footing we may then also proceed farther to infer or imagine experiences of various kinds, as the experiences of various kinds of living beings.

It is, then, only on the basis of a prior analysis of experience, by which certain data of experience,

and certain modes of experiencing, are discovered as ultimate, in the sense just explained, and also on certain results of experience which, on that basis, have been ascertained and systematised under various branches of positive and practical science, that the final conspectus or rationale of experience as a whole is now to be attempted. We stand, as it were, on the confines of the positively known world, and endeavour to connect it with the not-positively-known regions beyond it, but always under the guidance of those ultimate data of experience, and those ultimate modes of experiencing, which we have found exemplified and verified in positive knowledge. These furnish the clue which we have to follow. The result we aim at we call provisionally a conspectus or rationale of Reality, or of the Universe, so far as human powers may permit us to go towards framing one.

Admitting, then, that the terms are justified, let us look somewhat more closely at the thing they designate. It has been already said, that this will be found to belong to the panorama of objective thought, expanded to its utmost range, and enriched with the fullest perceived or imagined content; a panorama which will include all ideas, conceptions, emotions, desires, and volitions, to which the objects thought of by it would naturally give rise in human consciousness, when thought of as existing. Now all objects so thought of will necessarily, or simply as objects thought of, have the form of actuality, or of actual existents, as distinguished from that of possibility or necessity. That is to say, they are represented by the ideas or imagery of the panorama as simply existing,

whether in past, present, or future time, or *as if* they were real and actual existents. Their possibility or impossibility, necessity or contingency, and all doubts, questionings, reasons, and certitudes concerning them, all alike fall into and belong to the panorama of objective thought, as distinguished from the objects thought of simply as such. It is for the thought which belongs to, and is employed in consciously moulding and remoulding, that total panorama of objective thought, to determine which or what objects thought of there are good and sufficient reasons for holding to be real and actual in fact, as well as being represented in the form of actuality, or *as if* they were real and actual. With regard to the positively known world, this work is the work which is done by the positive sciences, and by those sciences of practice which lay the foundations for rational conduct. These sciences, in fact, so far as the positively known world is concerned, present us with a Conspectus of real and actual existence, constructed out of or deduced from the panorama of objective thought in its unsifted totality.

When we so enlarge or complete our panorama of objective thought, as to make it include the infinite and eternal Universe in its survey,—or rather attend to the fact, that of necessity it does so include it,—the same reasoning process, moulding and remoulding the objects thought of by it, objects represented in the form of actuality, goes on just as before. We have, as before, to consider what objects, thought of as actual, are, have been, or will be, real and actual in fact as well as in form, and are therefore to be taken as real and

actual existents, even though we can designate them only by the place they hold in the panorama, that is, by their relations therein to other objects thought of, and must admit that, in respect of their own intrinsic characteristics, they are not positively knowable by human powers. The conspectus of real and actual existents thus obtained from the panorama of objective thought, when enlarged to embrace infinity in connection with the positively known world, is what is intended by the term *conspectus of reality* in the constructive branch of philosophy. It results from our endeavour to carry farther the same process of thought which, in application to the positively known world, issues in the constructions of positive science; and therefore those objects thought of, the actual reality of which it is its purpose to ascertain, can only have that reality ascertained in case they can be brought into necessary connection with those the reality of which is ascertained by positive science, by being shown to be, not only real and actual existents, but also real existents in the full sense of *reality*, namely, existents which are real agents, that is, real conditions as well as real conditionates. In other words, the objects thought of by the Conspectus of Reality, as distinguished from the total panorama of objective thought, to which it belongs, are real agents which actually exist, have existed, or will exist, at some or all periods of infinite time.

Taking the panorama, then, in its utmost range, we may say, that real and actual existence in the fullest sense of the term, existence which has agency, singled out from other contents of the

§ 2. The Conspectus of Reality.

panorama, and with its meaning generalised so as to embrace the positively unknown (if any) as well as the positively known in its survey, is the special object-matter of the conspectus as distinguished from the panorama. The conspectus is not merely an ordered view or rationale of the contents of the panorama as a panorama; rational or intelligible order and system are included and involved in the panorama itself. The conspectus (a term perhaps less liable to misinterpretation than *rationale*) is a system of inferences, itself belonging to the panorama of objective thought, and founded upon the analysis of experience which it contains, concerning one class of objects contemplated by it as objects thought of, namely, Real and Actual Existents in the fullest sense of the term; the inferences being drawn from those real existents of which we have a positive knowledge to those of which we have no positive knowledge, through the relations in which those of the former class may be positively known by analysis to stand towards something, not themselves, which is not by itself positively known. Real Existence in the fullest sense, and in the widest range of generalisation, or as we may call it Objective Being, is thus the special object-matter of the conspectus aimed at by the constructive branch of philosophy.

§ 3. Percept-Matter in its Time and Space Relations.

§ 3. Speaking in general terms, then, we may say, that Real Existents which are also Real Conditions are the object thought of by that portion of objective thought which I have called the conspectus. But there is one real existent, and only one, which includes everything that is positively known to us as a real condition, namely, Matter. The first

great question, therefore, for the conspectus is this, —Whether Matter must be thought of as unconditioned, or whether we have grounds for supposing that it depends upon real conditions which are not material, though their nature may not be positively known, or even positively conceivable by us. The first step towards answering this question is plainly to go back to Matter simply as an object thought of, (not yet thought of as a real condition), the object of a complex perception, the analysis of which was given above in Book I, Chapters VI. and VII., and see from that analysis what elements are at once essential to the perception of Matter and common to it with other perceptions, these being the foundation of the relation in which it is perceived to stand to them, namely, that of being their real condition.

We cannot think of matter as a real condition without first thinking of it as a percept; and we cannot think of it as a percept without also thinking of it as standing in perceptual relations to other percepts. We must therefore go back to the analysis of what I will call percept-Matter, that is, Matter as the object of a complex perception, or Matter simply as object thought of, if we would fully understand the foundation of its character of real condition, which we found forced upon our thought, as a fact of inference, in certain cases of actual experience, and which gave us the perception of Matter as that real agent and re-agent, the nature and laws of which it was the province of positive science to discover.

In the above mentioned analysis it was found, that percept-Matter was a product of perceptions

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of sight and touch, (the latter term taken as including sense of bodily effort and motion), when combined in intimate union by processes of association. But all perceptions, these included, occupy some duration of time; and these, in addition, severally occupy some form of spatial extension, and in combination occupy some form or figure of three-dimensional space. Moreover it was found, that it is by their occupation of the same portion of space, for the same portion of time, that the combined perceptions which constitute a piece of percept-Matter are perceived or thought of as a single real existent. And it is by the time and space relations in which any such piece of percept-Matter stands to other percepts, whether material or otherwise, that its character of being a real condition, that is, of its acting and re-acting with other pieces of percept-Matter which bear a similar character, is perceived and established.

The analysis, therefore, which I thus briefly recall, may be taken as showing, that the time and space elements of percept-Matter are those which are at once essential to it as Matter, and common to it with all other percepts which occupy space, while its time element is at once essential to it as Matter, and common to it with all other percepts whatever; and farther, that the time and space relations in which its parts stand to one another, and to other percepts, are the foundation, common to all, of the relation of real conditioning, wherever it is found to exist between percepts. The common occupation of time and space, whereby all particular percepts stand in mutual relation to one another, is the perceptual fact which is their nexus or bond of

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union into a single world, taken simply in its character of a complex percept or object thought of as real.

Now the occupation of time and space by percepts, and the time and space relations in which percepts stand to one another, in accordance with it, are together that feature in experience which is one and the same in objective thought and in the object thought of. It is that feature in which perception and percept coincide, when brought to the test of presentative sense-perception. Besides being the nexus of percepts *inter se*, it is also the nexus between the subjective and objective aspects of what we call external reality, or a real external world. A piece of percept-Matter *is* exactly that which it is perceived as being by sight and touch. From this common basis of immediate sense-perception diverge, as from a single point, the distinct conceptions of time and space as objective, and of time and space as subjective. When we think of objects as independent of our actually and presentatively perceiving them, we think of the time and space relations which they occupy, and the time and space relations in which they stand to one another, as objective; when we think of our perception of those objects, we think of their time and space occupation and relations as part of our own perceptions, that is, as subjective. The former line of thought terminates, so far as time and space relations abstracted from their content are concerned, in the mathematician's conception of absolute time and absolute space, as necessary constituents or foundations of all external reality; the latter in the psychologist's conception of them as

properties of our own mental endowment, having no necessary counterpart in the reality which we perceive by means of them.

Observe, however, that either of these divergent views of time and space, when taken up into and made part of philosophy, as it commonly is, in combination with the assumption (usually tacit and unnoticed), that the distinction between Subject and Object is a self-evident and ultimate datum in experience, not only becomes incompatible with the other, as a philosophical view, but also increases the difficulty of accounting in any way for the deeply seated common-sense belief in a real external world, which it is the business of philosophy in some way or other to account for. The former does so because, in combination with that assumption, it involves supposing an immediate perception of abstract time and space, for which we have no apparent organs, instead of material objects simply, for which we have apparently the organs of sense. The latter does so still more markedly because, in combination with the same assumption, it precludes the arising of the idea of the objectivity of time and space altogether. Once assume the distinction between Subject and Object, as separate entities, to be an immediate and ultimate datum of experience, and therefore an ultimate basis of our thinking, and that thinking is *eo ipso* put out of harmony with experience; and the farther it goes upon those lines, the wider becomes the gap, the more irreparable the breach. I appeal to the analysis of experience in Book I, which shows that experience consists of inseparable aspects, named subjective and objective, and that

the perception or imagination of Subject and Object as real existents of any kind is a derivative from experience containing this distinction, and therefore not itself an ultimate datum.

Following the lines laid down by that analysis, we come to a different result, and one which fully satisfies the legitimate requirements alike of the mathematician and of the psychologist, yet without setting the view taken by either at variance with that taken by the other, divergent though they be, or with the common-sense belief in the reality of an external world, a belief which on the contrary it tends alike to account for and to justify. I mean, that Time and Space, according to that analysis, being originally known to us as necessary elements in percepts, and as such the foundation of the time and space relations which are perceived to obtain between all, are also necessarily seen, when taken in their totality, to be at once objective, answering to the requirements which the mathematician endeavours to meet by his conception of absolute time and space, and subjective, answering to the requirements which the psychologist expresses by his conception of them as part of of our mental endowment. For their opposite aspects, subjective and objective, are shown by the analysis to which I appeal to be exactly coincident, though still distinguishable, when brought to the test of immediate sense-perception, as in the case of seeing and handling a piece of matter. Perceptions, not Subjects and Objects, are in fact the root and origin of our whole knowledge. Every perception is at once perception and percept, as the analysis of reflective perception as a process has

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shown. And it has also been shown by a subsequent analysis, in what way the complex perception of Matter as object, and likewise that of its agency as real condition, are attained.

The idea of Time which corresponds to the mathematician's conception of absolute time, that is to say, the idea of time as at once objective and infinite in both directions, past and future, that is, of an objective eternity, is built up gradually by the experience of perceptions partly simultaneous, partly successive, and partly overlapping one another in point of time-duration. Its objectivity is the objectivity which is common to all percepts. Its eternity is the objective correlate of the experienced fact, that every limit which we can perceive, think of, or imagine, falls within time, that is, has time beyond it as soon as it is drawn or imagined. A limit which is not a limit between parts, as well as beyond a part, of time is not presentable to consciousness at all, even in thought. Time is therefore known to be necessarily infinite, and infinite in both the directions of decrease by division, and of increase by addition, of part after part *in infinitum;* every particular time-duration being a part of one and the same Eternity. It is likewise, of course, a pure abstraction, the abstract idea of it being treated *as if* it had no content, and therefore no divisions, notwithstanding that it is only by differences derived from its content that it is distinguishable into parts, or measurable in respect of those parts, or even presentable in consciousness at all. It is an universal and necessary element in perception, treated in idea, or by abstraction, as if it were by

itself a complete perception. But by that treatment it does not lose either its objectivity or its infinity; it is not from them that we abstract, in abstracting from the particular divisions by which the idea of it as an abstraction has been reached. When Newton speaks of absolute time as "flowing equably," he is obviously not abstracting from all division of it into lengths. Nevertheless the supposed equality of its ultimate parts of length (allowing that divisions are introduced at all) is the only supposition which is compatible with that perfect homogeneity and continuity, which are involved in the idea of real time in supposed or attempted abstraction from divisions altogether.

Similarly with regard to three-dimensional Space, which corresponds to the absolute space of the mathematician, by which latter conception is intended, as I understand it, a space which is itself unfigured, but figurable by the introduction of any number of divisions, and in any number of modes. The idea of space as objective and infinite is built up gradually by the experience of the combined perceptions of the visual and tactual senses, the latter being taken to include sensations of bodily effort and movement. It is built up *pari passu* with our perception of an external and material world. Its objectivity is the objectivity of that complex percept. Its infinity is the objective correlate of the experienced fact, that all limits fall within it, having space beyond them in the moment of their being drawn or imagined to be drawn, and that in both the directions of divisibility and extensibility, just as in the case of time. Like time also it is a pure abstraction, being an universal and

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necessary element in all perception of Matter, or a material world, treated *as if* it were a concrete or empirical percept, but without forfeiting on that account either its objectivity or its infinity. It is treated as if emptied of all content, by abstracting from those elements of sight and touch, the combination of which constitutes our sense-percept of Matter, and which in real separation from their co-element of space are, equally with it, an impossibility and wholly unpresentable in consciousness.

Just as in the case of time, it is not from the objectivity or from the infinity of space that we abstract, when we abstract from its co-element of sense, and from the divisions which that co-element introduces, or enables us ideally to introduce. We treat it by abstraction as an infinite and objective void; not the less infinite, nor the less objective, because not presentable to consciousness in separation, that is, by itself alone without its necessary co-element, nor even as an abstraction of thought or imagination, unless we retain for that purpose some figuration derived ultimately from its co-element of sense, as we do when we represent it as a void exhaustively divisible by three straight lines, or axes, crossing each other in a single point and at right angles to each other, that is to say, as three-dimensional empty space. We treat it by abstraction as a wholly unfigured void, when we think of it as that void which *would be* exhaustively divisible by those axes of dimension, supposing we were to introduce them for the purpose of defining it, but which apart from that introduction is complete vacuity. The spatial co-element of percept-Matter or of the material world, abstracted

from its co-element of sense, and thought of by itself, is thought of as an infinite vacuity, which in one word is *Space.*

It is obvious that Space thus defined, as abstract, objective, and infinite vacuity, is not identical with space of positive, negative, or zero curvature, (unless it be incidentally with the last, since a curvature of zero quantity is equivalent to no curvature at all), nor yet with space of four or any higher number of dimensions. All such spaces would be instances of already figured, not merely figurable, space, and as such would one and all be contained within that wholly unfigured and infinite vacuity, the conception of which we attain by figuring it as three-dimensional by the three (Cartesian) axes spoken of above, and to which the single term *space,* unqualified, is alone properly applicable. The three dimensions, which we use to designate this space, are a parallel case to the equability of flow by which Newton characterises his conception of absolute time.

It is farther necessary, before quitting this part of the subject, to notice another remarkable difference which exists between objective Time and objective Space, both being taken in their utmost abstraction. We often hear it said, that to abstract all content, and therefore all change, from time, is to reduce it in imagination to a standstill, and to leave us with the image not only of an empty but also of an immovable eternity, an eternal *nunc stans,* in which there is no former and latter, but in which beginning and end (wherever taken) are simultaneous. But this is not so. For in the first place, to reduce time-duration itself, that is, the beginning

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and end (wherever taken) of time-duration, to simultaneity, would not be to reduce it to an immovable or stationary duration, but to reduce it to a point of time, a division having no duration, that is, to something incapable of content, incapable of existing. The duration of one thing may be simultaneous with that of another, and so make together with it one single duration; but that a single duration should have its beginning and its end simultaneous is a contradiction in terms. And secondly, the appearance of immovability in a single duration is susceptible of a simple explanation, as follows. That which seems to be stationary in objective and abstract time is not objective time itself, but the spatial image by which we represent it, the image of a line. In the companion instance of objective and abstract space, the complete vacuity which we have before us is truly stationary; the reason of which is, that we tacitly contrast it with time, and find no change in it from moment to moment. But in the case of time, in abstracting from all its content, we abstract also from space which is part of that content, and consequently have nothing whatever left to contrast it with. Apart from the image of a line whereby we represent it, (yet often without noticing that this is a retained part of its own content), perfectly abstract time is neither stationary nor moving; it is pure nothing; it vanishes from consciousness altogether at the moment of ideally completing the abstraction, but not by (as it were) collapsing into a point.

The difference, then, which I would signalise between abstract objective time and abstract

objective space consists in the superior degree of abstraction, of which time, as compared to space, is capable. Space cannot by abstraction be divested of the characteristic of stationariness, that is, of having the opposite limits of any part of it simultaneous with each other; for which reason time is a pre-supposition of it. Time on the other hand has literally no pre-supposition, nor any other term to describe it but duration; and duration, as we have just seen, has no other characteristic whatever, save the fact, that the beginning and the end of any part of it, that is, its opposite limits, are not simultaneous. It is only by a figure derived from comparison with spatial phenomena, that this characteristic is described as a motion or a flow. Duration is not a term which, in the strict sense, admits either of definition or description.

The contrast now signalised precisely harmonises with the metaphysically learnt fact, that time-duration is the necessary formal co-element of all consciousness whatsoever, while space, or rather some mode of spatial extension, is the immediate formal co-element of certain kinds only of sense-perception. Change in sense or feeling, whether in point of kind or of intensity, belongs strictly and immediately to time alone, and is perceived either as occupying or as dividing it. Perceived difference of one sense-content from another is, in its lowest terms, nothing but change of feeling in time, and this may be said to be its analysis. True, neither change nor difference, *per se*, is strictly speaking definable, any more than time, or sense, or feeling. Change, however, seems better

adapted to render difference intelligible, than difference change, because it connects the fact, which both terms alike designate, with the unity which is necessary to constitute it an empirically perceived fact, namely, the time-duration in which it occurs; that is to say, the term *change* more directly suggests time as its necessary co-element, than the term *difference* does, which is hardly ever taken to mean difference in its lowest terms only, but more readily calls up the idea of the countless differences existing and observable in natural phenomena, and already in great measure reduced to classification. The term *change* on the other hand not only fixes attention on the bare fact of difference at the moment of its being actually perceived, but is also habitually used in connection and contrast with the term *motion*, whereby it acquires a considerable degree of precision.

The last named distinction, between change and motion, is at once familiar, elementary, and of cardinal importance. Motion is a special kind of change, the perception of which arises only when, spatial perceptions having supervened, changes are perceived in the spatial relations of a sense-content, which, supposing those spatial relations unaffected by them, would be perceived only as occupying or dividing some time-duration. Briefly described, motion is change of place occurring in time. We see, then, that motion, which in the physical analysis of Matter is an ultimate fact, or ultimate element, which has no positively known real condition behind it, has several pre-suppositions which are requisite to render it intelligible, namely those of time, space, sensation, and change, when

treated as a percept, and submitted to subjective or metaphysical analysis.

§ 4. Method and Division of the enquiry.

§ 4. The essentials of Matter, both as an object simply thought of, or what I have now called percept-Matter, and as an object thought of as an agent or real condition, have thus been recalled from our previous analyses, and this has involved setting forth its relation to Time and Space, both as co-elements in its composition, and as the abstract yet infinite and objective media in which it exists. The question with which the foregoing Section opened has thus been in some measure prepared for answering, the question namely,—Is Matter, which is the only positively known real condition, or more strictly aggregate of real conditions, to be conceived in its entirety as unconditioned, or as conditioned upon something real but not material, the nature of which is not positively known?

From what has now been said we see the directions in which we must look for such positively unknown real conditions of Matter, if any are to be inferred at all. If any such exist, they must be looked for either in Time, or in Time and Space together, space without time, that is, except as occupying some time-duration, being, like everything else, wholly unpresentable to consciousness. This however can hardly be called imposing a limitation on our thought, time-duration being an essential or *sine qua non* constituent in thinking itself, and therefore limiting it only in the sense of contributing to constitute it what it is. Time and Space are not only infinite, but they are the source of our ideas of infinity, the only infinites of which

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infinity is originally predicable, and are implied in all ideas of direction, however these may otherwise be specifically determined. When we say, that the positively unknown real conditions of Matter, if any such exist, must exist in either in Time or in Time and Space together, we really say no more than that they must be thought of conformably to those most general, though strictly necessary, conditions of thought.

The first question concerning such real conditions of Matter as we are in search of relates simply to their preceding the existence of Matter in time, irrespective of whether their own existence is one in time only, or in time and space together. If, besides preceding, they also continue to exist simultaneously with Matter, this would plainly involve their having location in space as well as in time, during the existence of Matter, since Matter itself exists in space, and that space is infinite. I mean that, since by hypothesis they are co-existent conditions of Matter, they must exist either in or beyond whatever space Matter occupies. If however they are once supposed to have location in space, as well as to occupy time, they may also be supposed to continue, either after the disappearance of Matter from space, or after the disappearance of space itself with the Matter which occupies it, unless indeed spatial relations are taken as an essential element in their nature. The first question is therefore one of simple precedence in order of time.

In putting these questions we plainly have to imagine either time alone, or time and space together, as occupied by some real existents, not

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material, which are also agents or real conditions; that is, we have to supply, in imagination, our objective but abstract time and space with a new content, composed of elements different in kind, or at any rate in the mode of their combination, from any of those co-elements of feeling, which are now known to us as constituents of matter, but elements which like them are modes of consciousness, and like them are immaterial. And if we supposed that the real existents so imagined not only precede Matter, but also continue to exist during its existence, or after its disappearance, Matter being itself an agent or real condition, as we have seen it is, of the existence of modes of consciousness, we should then have to suppose also, that they in their turn were partly conditioned by Matter; that is, were modified and made different from what they would have been, if Matter had not previously been brought into existence by them. In short we should then be compelled to imagine Matter, and therefore the whole material world, as we positively kuow it, to be but one vast link in an otherwise unknown Order of Real Conditioning. We should have to imagine it not merely as conditioned upon something positively unknown to us, which has preceded and still accompanies it, but also as conditioning something positively unknown to us, which now accompanies it, and will continue to exist after it.

The vista which these possibilities lay open to the imagination is a vista into what is commonly and truly called the Unseen World. Supposing an unseen world to exist, which, though positively unknown to us, still exists in the same full sense

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of the term as the material or seen world, it is plain that the only way in which we can approach it, starting from analysis of actual experience, is from the side of its time and space relations, not from that of its content, since that content is by supposition entirely unknown to us. We cannot approach it by selecting rare, abnormal, or unexplained phenomena for investigation, such for instance as supposed apparitions of the dead, or other spirit-manifestations, or such as thought-transference or telepathy, will-influence, clairvoyance, or prevision of the future. Careful investigation of these and similar phenomena is undoubtedly of the highest value, and may conceivably result in establishing the fact, that some at least of the phenomena investigated are attributable only to real conditions which are not material, and which therefore belong strictly to the unseen world, supposing the true conception of an unseen world to have been already acquired. But its results cannot of themselves give us such a conception, since they can give us no insight into the nature of the real but unseen existents, which are the supposed real conditions of the abnormal phenomena investigated. On the other hand it is equally conceivable, that the investigation may establish the fact of the dependence of all such abnormal phenomena upon modes or operations of Matter which have hitherto escaped our cognisance. In that case new domains would have been acquired and incorporated into the dominion of positive physical science, but no knowledge of a really existent unseen world, in the sense of being a non-material world, would have been attained. The

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main question of the constructive branch of philosophy would then continue in precisely the same condition as before. In other words, the investigation into the abnormal phenomena now in question belongs to positive science, and is not a part of philosophy.

Philosophy is restricted by its analytical method to base its construction or conspectus of the Universe, and therefore also of the unseen world which, supposing it to exist, is a part of it, upon analysis of experience, and therefore, as already said, to approach whatever realities or real conditions may exist in the unseen world from the side of their purely formal, that is, their time and space relations. Approaching in this way, we see that the next main question of construction, briefly stated, must be this,—Is the supposed unseen world of real conditions a thing of the remote past only, or of the remote past and the remote future only, or is it about us here and now in the same Space in which our material world exists, in action and re-action with it, during the whole course of its continuance, and destined possibly to continue after its disappearance, though with modifications which will have been received from it?

One thing is plain, supposing the existence of an unseen world of real conditions, namely, that the seen and the unseen worlds must be conceived as together forming a single Order of Real Conditioning, and that the meaning of the term *Nature*, as understood and employed in positive science, must be so extended as to embrace the unseen world, and include it together with the seen in that single Order. The existence of an unseen world of real

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conditions is a distinct question, and one which must be answered in the affirmative, either along with or before the question of its time and space relations to the seen world, if the latter question is to have any real significance. And these two questions must be kept distinct in thought, even though they may be answered only by one and the same train of considerations.

Now there is but one such train of considerations open to us, namely that which takes its origin in our positive knowledge of Matter. The nature or essential constitution of Matter in its lowest terms, as made known to us directly by positive science, and the operations of Matter in its highest known terms, that is, in the case of living matter proximately conditioning the highest forms of conscious action, as the nature of these operations is indirectly made known to us by practical science;—or in other words, Matter in its lowest and its highest known degrees of development;—these are the extremes between which Matter lies in its entirety, and these offer us the only positively known foundations upon which we have to build, the only positively known premisses from which we have to argue, in endeavouring to trace the relations of Matter to any real agent or agents which are not material.

The whole subject thus falls of itself into two divisions, Matter as known first in its constitution, by positive, and secondly in its results, by practical science. It will be well to keep in the main to these divisions. The first shows us Matter as real condition and conditionate within itself, that is, having parts which act and re-act on one another,

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and thus opens up the question of its genesis, the question of its dependence or non-dependence on some real condition or conditions which are not included in itself. The second shows us Matter as the real condition of a conditionate which does not re-act upon it, namely, consciousness, and thereby suggests the possibility, either of its becoming itself the real condition of other modes of consciousness than those which are as yet known to us, or of its giving rise to other real conditions, not material, upon which modes of consciousness, as yet unknown, may proximately depend.

The highly tentative character of the enquiry in both its branches will of course be obvious. Nevertheless I think its legitimacy is undeniable, provided we keep to the premisses which an analysis of actual experience supplies, and remember that we are occupied solely in drawing conclusions which must be warranted by those premisses, not in laying the foundations for a pre-conceived dogmatic system.

CHAPTER II.

MATTER IN RELATION TO TIME AND SPACE.[1]

Book IV. Ch. II. — § 1. Analysis of Matter.

§ 1. Matter as Real Condition, the Matter which is treated of by the mathematical and physical sciences, as distinguished from what was spoken of as percept-Matter in the foregoing Chapter, is that to which we have now to turn. In point of existence they are of course identical; they are one and the same real existent treated from opposite points of view. From each point of view that single reality will admit of analysis, and each analysis will be different. Real Matter has in fact two wholly different analyses, one as percept-Matter into the modes of consciousness and their combination which compose the perception of it, the other as real-condition Matter, which is the object of positive science. This latter analysis of it as a really conditioning and conditioned physical substance, which I shall now call simply *Matter*, is what we have first to do with, since with analysis all true investigation must begin.

Not that it is necessary here to undertake the analysis afresh. It will be enough to recall that

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[1] The argument of the present Chapter was substantially contained in my Address to the Aristotelian Society, Nov. 1891, entitled *Matter*, and published in the Society's Proceedings, Vol. II., No. I., Part I., in 1892.

which was given in Book II.; which it will be remembered was founded upon Newton's conception and definitions. It is an analysis in the strict sense of the term, that is, it is applicable to all forms and states of Matter, whether primordial or derivative, and does not include Matter over again, as one of the constituent members of analysis, out of which Matter is represented as composed. To trace back Matter, in the various forms in which we actually meet with it, to Matter in some simple form, as for instance that of Atoms swimming in a void, or of Vortex-rings rotating in a perfect fluid, would not be in the strict sense to analyse Matter. Again it would be no true analysis of Matter to explain it, with Aristotle, as the product of one or more of four causes, the material, the formal, the final, and the efficient,—the first of which, Aristotle's ὕλη, is merely Matter over again, reduced by abstraction to an imaginary state of indefiniteness or indetermination, or, as Aristotle calls it, potentiality.

Newton begins his *Principia* with considerations which yield what is strictly an analysis of Matter. In all Matter there are parts which cohere so as to occupy space, and this coherence or occupation of space is Force. That is to say, the fact of coherence taken in abstraction is Force, the coherence of parts is Matter. The whole, or any particle, of Matter, considered by itself, has force, which is its *vis insita;* the *vis insita* in any particle of Matter, when exerted upon another particle possessing *vis insita*, or existing between them as separate particles, is *vis impressa;* and the *vis insita* in any particle upon which *vis impressa* is

exerted is its resistance to a change of its state, and in that character is known as its *vis inertiæ*. Force is thus an essential element of that occupancy of space which we call Matter. And force in its lowest terms is not otherwise conceivable than as existing between parts of three-dimensional space, which, when force exists between them, are or *ipso facto* become Matter, and offer resistance to any change of their state externally initiated, all such states, taken at a given moment of time, being exhaustively divided by Newton into states either of rest or of uniform motion in a straight line.

The states of rest and motion, in one or other of which all matter is found at any given period of its existence, make no part of its analysis as matter, even though the period which we take as given is that in which we conceive matter to have originated. States of rest and states of motion are equally primordial. We must indeed conceive the material world as originally coming into existence with its parts in states of rest or motion relatively to each other; so that, while on the one hand we cannot conceive force to be the cause of motion as distinguished from rest, yet, on the other, we must conceive the relative rest or motion of its parts (though not entering into the analysis of matter itself) to be members of the analysis of any given state of the material world as a whole, at whatever period of its existence we may take as given.

Returning to the parts of three-dimensional space spoken of above, these, we must conceive, taken alone or in the abstract, without the force existing between them, are not Matter. What they are

or would be without it, more than being parts of space, is unknown to us. Hence the existence of Matter is an ultimate fact, though not an ultimate datum, of experience; its existence is for us a final inexplicability, while its nature as a real existent is analysable into parts (not, be it observed, points) of space, and their coherence; the cohering parts and their coherence being simultaneously existing facts, which during their whole co-existence constitute Matter.

The parts of space are equally essential to Matter with the force which is their coherence. To treat force as operating between points, and not parts, of space, is to treat it as an entity, and not as a distinguishable but inseparable element of Matter, which therefore, that is, because inseparable, requires a co-element for its concrete, real, or empirical existence. Force imagined as acting from mathematical points, and along mathematical lines, of space is a fictitious entity, an entity made out of an abstraction. Such force would be exerted by nothing on nothing. It may offer a convenient mode of conceiving and calculating material changes and operations, but it is not alone a generator, nor, together with points and lines, an analysis of Matter. Space alone, much more Matter, cannot be originated out of mathematical points, lines, or surfaces, all of which pre-suppose its existence.—Taking into account the coherence or *vis insita* of Matter, or any particle of it, and the *vis impressa* which as a fact is exerted on and by separately coherent particles of Matter *inter se*, we may define or describe Matter, in all its parts, as *adverse and active occupancy of space.*

§ 2. Finite divisibility of Matter.

§ 2. The analysis of Matter just recalled applies to Matter generally, that is, to Matter of every kind, including the ether which is sometimes spoken of as not material, whatever branch or branches of positive science may be specially devoted to investigate its kinds severally, and also to every part or particle of Matter belonging to any of those several kinds. But the very distinguishing between Matter and particles of Matter at once suggests the question, whether the distinction is one which owes its introduction to our own thought, adopting and carrying farther the obvious difference between separate masses of Matter, which meets us in everyday experience, for purposes of scientific measurement, calculation, and experiment, or whether it is a distinction which may be known to be founded in the nature of Matter itself. Or otherwise stated, the question is raised, whether the existence of ultimately limited and finite particles is merely a convenient and valuable working hypothesis, or whether it is a fact which we cannot but admit, from the known nature of Matter as given in its analysis.

But to attempt an answer to these questions would carry us beyond our present purpose, and far into the mysteries of physical science, for they are questions which involve the foundations of the Atomic Theory. For our purposes we must keep closer to the analysis of Matter, and raise not these, but what may fairly be called a previous, more abstract, and therefore analytically speaking a deeper question, which is this,—Is there, or is there not, a valid reason for supposing, that Nature has fixed a minimum limit to the space which must

be occupied, if Matter is to exist in it? If there is, then that minimum volume of occupied space may be called an ultimate particle of Matter, whether or not it exists in separation, and whether or not multitudes of such ultimate particles exist separately from one another, that is, exist as what are called Atoms. The question thus raised is that of the finite or infinite divisibility of Matter in respect of space.

Now both time and space are divisible, as well as extensible (if I may use the word), strictly speaking *in infinitum*. That is to say, no part of either of them is so small as not to be again divisible into smaller parts, or so large as not to have a still larger beyond it. This holds good of space as a three-dimensional vacuity, and of time as a one-dimensional vacuity in both directions, past and future. Time and space are not divisible and extensible merely *in indefinitum*, in whichever of its two senses this kind of divisibility or of extensibility is understood. To be divisible or extensible *in indefinitum* may mean either (1) that we do not know whether or not the things spoken of have a limit, or else (2) that we know they have a limit, without knowing where it falls. But it should be noted, that the indefiniteness in both senses attaches solely to our knowledge, not to the real objects thought of. In objects thought of there is no indefiniteness, and consequently no intermediary between finite and infinite as alternatives. Objects, therefore, which we call indefinite in the second sense are in reality finite. Now time and space are positively known to have no limit, either of division or of extension, either

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κατ' ἀφαίρεσιν or κατὰ πρόσθεσιν, and thus are said to be divisible and extensible strictly *in infinitum*, or without limit in either direction. Here we are concerned only with the infinite divisibility of three-dimensional space.

Recalling, then, our analysis of Matter into parts of space cohering together and offering resistance to other parts (if any) similarly cohering, a plain reason will be seen for supposing that this space occupancy, which is Matter, has some quantitative limit in the direction of divisibility, below which it does not exist as Matter. The parts into which any portion of space may be divided are each of them space, but the parts into which any portion of space occupancy may be divided are not each of them space occupancy, since space is occupied only by their cohering. Space therefore is divisible to a further extent than Matter; that is, Matter is not divisible *in infinitum*, but only *in indefinitum*, and that in the second of the two meanings of the phrase noted above, namely, that we know it has a limit to its divisibility, but do not know where that limit falls. It is known on sufficient grounds to be finite in the direction of divisibility, or in other words, to have a minimum limit of magnitude in space, below which it does not exist. Matter, to exist at all, must have a finite minimum magnitude or volume; though this statement leaves the question of mass, that is, what quantity or density of Matter may be necessary to fill any such minimum volume, entirely untouched.

§ 3. Genesis of Matter.

§ 3. Taking it, then, as proved, that Matter has some necessary minimum limit to its magnitude considered as space occupancy, and remembering

that Matter is the only thing positively known to us as real in the full sense of being an agent or real condition, we now approach the question of its relation to time, that is, the question of its genesis, duration, and cessation. And first of its duration in respect of divisibility. We have seen that Matter is finite in the direction of divisibility with respect to space. But this finiteness by no means implies its corresponding finiteness in divisibility with respect to time-duration. Its occupancy of its minimum of space may conceivably come to pass instantaneously, and the occupation of every part of that minimum be simultaneous. For since spatial extension involves simultaneous existence of all its parts, the occupation of any number of its parts at a given moment can be as easily conceived as the occupation of one, or of a single pair. In other words, the genesis of Matter, assuming it to have had one, need not occupy, or have occupied, any time-duration at all. Assuming, I say, such an event to have taken place, a question to which we shall come presently, then indeed a generation or genesis of Matter which should be conceived as a process occupying time, or having duration, would of itself imply an operation of real conditions, not material, during which Matter was *in fieri*, and only at the end of which Matter appeared as a product; and a generation of this kind would at once connect it with an unseen world, of which it would be a conditionate. For its original genesis would then appear as the termination of a process of interchange between what we might figuratively call potential and kinetic energy in some unknown but non-material agents,

by analogy to that with which we are familiar in the operations of Matter already existing.

But it is not with any process or any antecedent whatever of this kind, which would necessarily belong to an unseen world, that we have just now to do. We are not here concerned with the antecedents of Matter. We are here concerned with Matter, not up to the moment of its coming into existence (supposing such a moment to be a fact), but only at and after that moment; that is to say, with what is necessarily involved in the fact of its existence as Matter in time. Now, in thinking of its durational existence, we must necessarily begin by taking hypothetically some moment as that of the beginning of its duration, and the question is, whether from that moment it necessarily occupies some finite minimum of time, as we rightly infer, from its analysis, that it necessarily occupies some finite minimum of space. On so taking the question, a great difference at once discloses itself. The last named inference is drawn from the fact, that coherence, which is force, and necessary to Matter, requires the simultaneous existence of at least two distinguishable portions of space, each of which as space is divisible *in infinitum*, without ceasing to be space. But no corresponding circumstance is found in the time-duration of Matter, since different but simultaneously existing contents of time-duration necessarily occupy one time-duration only, and not two or more. Two simultaneous time-durations are an impossibility.

The alternative conception, to which we are forced, accordingly is, that the duration of Matter

is equally divisible with time-duration itself, that is to say, *in infinitum.* Go on dividing its duration as long as you may, you will never come to a duration so short as to be indivisible into lengths still shorter. And supposing its genesis to be an event in time, by this event being instantaneous is simply meant, that there is no time-duration occupied by that event, namely, its occupancy of its minimum of space. The divisibility of Matter, therefore, in respect of time-duration and its divisibility in respect of space occupancy do not stand on the same footing; its divisibility may be infinite in the former respect, while finite in the latter. So far as I am aware, there is nothing to show that it is not infinitely divisible in the former respect, like time itself in which it exists. To say the very least, the presumption is in favour of it, until it is disproved; and the only argument against it seems to be that which at first sight is derivable from conceiving its genesis as a process which has duration, and which, supposing it to have duration, is a process prior to its existence as Matter.

The question as to the fact of the genesis or origination of Matter in a pre-existing time is that to which I next address myself, and this question is not one to be settled without careful consideration. By its genesis is meant its production by or out of some real pre-existent condition or conditions, belonging to an unseen world; and this question, yes or no, must not be pre-judged by assuming that its genesis, if any, must occupy a certain minimum of time-duration. For if what we call its genesis is instantaneous, occupying of itself no duration, the possibility is *eo ipso* suggested, that Matter may be

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co-eval with time itself *a parte ante*, or in other words, may have existed, without conceivable beginning, from all eternity.

But the affirmative conclusion of our present question, that is to say, that Matter was generated at some epoch or epochs of a pre-existing time, follows from the duality (or possibly plurality) of parts, and the fact of their coherence, which we discern in Matter by the bare analysis of it. The composite nature of Matter as an agent or real condition compels us to seek for some explanation of the fact of its composition, that is, of the combination or coherence of two (or more) portions of space, so as to become visible and tangible, and in short to form that unique and active physical substance, which the name denotes; or in other words, forces us to infer, that it has some real conditions, existing independently of it, which, as not being material, must belong to an unseen world, standing in close though unseen connection with the material world.

It is of physical Matter, of Matter as the only agent or real condition positively known to us, that we seek an explanation. And it is plain, that no real explanation of anything can be offered by any supposed real conditions, unless they are conditions existing independently of that which they condition; since otherwise they would pre-suppose the real existence of the very thing which they are required to explain. If, therefore, Matter has any real conditions at all, they must, as real conditions of it, exist without in any way depending upon the existence of the Matter which they condition. This consideration precludes the elements in our

perception of Matter, that is, of what I have called percept-Matter, namely, visual and tactual perceptions, together with their combination as, in particular cases, occupying the same portion of space for the same portion of time, as in seeing and handling a material object, from affording an explanation, as if they were real conditions, of the real existence of that Matter, of which they are, subjectively speaking, the analysis. For we have seen, that these perceptions depend for their own existence upon the existence of the Matter, of which in combination they are the perception.

But more than this. In this independent existence necessarily required in the real conditions of Matter, their pre-existence to Matter is also involved. And this circumstance it is, which makes it necessary to regard physical Matter as a product, and its production as an event in pre-existing time. For to suppose matter co-eval with its real conditions, or (as it may be expressed) produced by them from all eternity, would be to suppose that they depended for their existence upon Matter, in the same sense in which Matter depends for its existence upon them; and this supposition would yield no real explanation of Matter, since it would involve the fallacy of assuming the existence of Matter as one of the conditions of itself, namely, as requisite to condition its own conditions. A reciprocal dependence between Matter and its supposed real conditions would not only, for the reason assigned, afford no explanation of the existence of Matter, but, supposing it known or admitted as a fact, would be a fact standing in need of explanation just as

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much as the existence of Matter, and for the same reason, namely, as presenting us with another and still more composite phenomenon. Consequently, unless Matter can be shown to afford an explanation of its own existence as Matter, that is, to be self-existent or *causa sui*, it must be conceived as a product, at some epoch of pre-existing time, of some independent and pre-existing real conditions which are not material, but belong to a real though unseen world.

Now the existence of a composite substance cannot be self-explanatory, any more than that of a complex perception. If Matter had been *(per impossibile)* a simple percept, the immediate content or object of a simple sense-perception, it would then have shared the ultimate and wholly unquestionable character of all other perceptions of that kind, which are what they are immediately perceived as being, or in other words are perceptions immediately objectified in reflective perception. But a real and complex existent, to the perception of which we attain only by processes of association and reasoning, cannot also be self-evident, that is, cannot carry in itself the proof that its existence is not derivative, but unconditioned, and therefore eternal. The processes themselves by which we arrive at the knowledge of its nature and reality suggest the idea, that, if we had additional data enabling us to carry them on farther, we should find it conditioned upon other real existents preceding it in time, which, as the case stands, are hidden from us. And the only argument by which the presumption thus raised could be rebutted, the argument of immediate self-evidence, is, as we have seen, impossible in the case

of a complex existent, such as Matter is. The reality in the full sense, that is, the reality and efficient agency, of Matter are inferred facts, or objects of inference, and by the laws of inference our conception of them must abide. I mean that, since they cannot of themselves possess the self-evident and unquestionable character of simple sense-perceptions, (which be it noted for that very reason cannot be real conditions), their ultimate or self-existent character, in the order of real conditioning, must depend for its proof on those processes of reasoning and inference which, when pushed to their utmost limit, yield, as we have seen, precisely the contrary result.—In short, while our desire of completing our speculative knowledge of the Universe compels us to seek for some self-existent real condition, or First Cause, of all things, the nature of consciousness or experience, in which the laws of reasoning and inference are included, forbids our ever attaining the conception of one, or in other words, condemns the supposed object of any such conception, though not the conception of some real existence which transcends our powers of speculative knowledge, as an illusion.

Matter must therefore be held to be a product of real, pre-existing, but positively unknown conditions, unless and until its self-sufficiency, or what is by some technically termed its *Aseity*, shall be positively proved;—a result which the nature of the problem itself seems to render impossible. And this position co-incides with the more roughly reached position of common-sense thinking. Only there is this difference, that common-sense stultifies its really valid conclusion, that Matter is a product

of real but non-material conditions, by immediately adding,—*Someboby must have made it.* What is the analysis of *Somebody?* The fallacy of this will become farther apparent as we proceed.

A word or two in retrospect of our argument. The line of reasoning based on analysis, by which we have been led in this Chapter to infer, that Matter requires a finite minimum (or finite minima) of space extension in order to exist as Matter, is but a particular case of the general line of reasoning just sketched. It specifies a particular circumstance in the nature of Matter, namely, its relation to the space which it occupies, in respect of which its existence calls for further explanation, by the discovery of some non-material real condition. For in all reasoning, whether we are engaged in analysis, or in construction by inference founded on analysis, we are compelled to push the process to its furthest limits, the ideal limits consisting in either case of something ultimate and in its own kind self-explanatory, demanding and indeed capable of no further questioning. These ideal limits consist of some self-evident and immediately known data of experience in the case of analysis, and here they seem to be positively known and actually reached limits also, real as well as ideal. In the case of construction they, the ideal limits, consist of some inferred reality, which, in order to be self-explanatory, ought also to be known, by inferential processes, to be self-existent; in which case the limits may for ever remain ideal only, and never be in fact attainable by reasoning.

Now, accepting from analysis the fact, that coherent, resisting, and active substance, that is to

say, Matter, requires the juxtaposition of two or more distinguishable parts of space, the question necessarily arises, How comes such a juxtaposition to be, or result in, the formation of a coherent, resisting, and active substance? What is it that brings about the formation of Matter? Space and its divisions alone afford no answer to this question, which plainly demands some real condition, some real agency, to be specified. Neither do the sense-perceptions and redintegrative processes of consciousness, into which percept-Matter may be analysed; for these account only for our perception of Matter as a coherent, resisting, and active substance, not for its coming into real existence as such a substance, irrespective of the fact of our perceiving or not perceiving it. There is, therefore, plainly some real agent or agency at work in the formation of physical Matter, the existence of which we are compelled by the laws of reasoning to infer, but the specific nature of which we are unable to assign.

Here, however, an objection may possibly be raised to the pre-existence, though not to the existence, of this real agent or agency. The appearance of pre-existence, it may be said, in the real conditions of Matter is an appearance only, arising from our perhaps necessary mode of putting the question, that is, of referring condition and conditionate to different times of existence by the mere act of thinking of them as different, or passing from one to the other in thought, when in reality they may occupy one and the same time-duration. Granting, then, it may be said, that some real non-material conditions of Matter are requisite to its

existence, still this does not show, that these may not be and have been concomitant but not pre-existing real conditions of its existence, and that from all eternity; or in other words, it does not show, that Matter is not eternal *a parte ante*, though conditioned upon the co-existence of non-material existents which are likewise eternal. But the answer to this objection consists in showing, as was shown above, that the conditions upon which Matter depends must be conceived as existing independently of it, if they are to afford an explanation of its existence. And this can only be by conceiving them as pre-existent; since, if they were concomitant only and not pre-existent, they must be conceived as themselves dependent upon the existence of Matter, a proceeding which either assumes Matter as part-condition of its own existence, or denies that its existence demands any explanation at all. In short, the fact of the real existence of Matter is not explained by regarding Matter as a part of a larger whole composed of simultaneously existing real but unseen existents, but requires the supposition of real pre-existing unseen existents to account for it.

Our conclusion therefore must be, that physical Matter is not eternal *a parte ante*, but has had a genesis as an event in pre-existing time; or in other words, that there was a time when no minimum or minima of Matter existed, but only some non-material agents, the operations of which *inter se* gave rise, at some particular epoch or epochs, to Matter as their real conditionate; agents and operations the intrinsic nature of which we have no means of conceiving positively;—and

this conclusion holds good, whether we think of those unknown agents or real conditions as existing in time only, or in time and space together.

Taking, then, the genesis of Matter from its unknown real conditions as an event in time, distinguishable from the real antecedents which lead up to it, we see that it does not by itself occupy any time-duration, but is instantaneous, taking place, as it were, *uno ictu* throughout the whole of the space which the Matter then generated occupies. The existence of Matter, on the other hand, as distinguished from its genesis, of itself excludes the idea of instantaneousness, and requires that of duration. Matter which existed for no length of time-duration whatever would not exist at all. Its genesis is that instantaneous event with which its existence as a reality begins, and from which its duration is reckoned. And this duration, which we may call its time-occupancy, must be taken as divisible *in infinitum*, and therefore continuous, just as much as the abstract time-duration is, which it occupies. Nothing, however, is thereby implied as to its ceasing or not ceasing to exist, after a period of continuous existence, however brief or however prolonged that period may be. It is conceivable, that what to our sense-perception is a continuous existence of Matter may in reality be a succession of generations and destructions, with infinitesimal periods of continuous existence between them. And in this case every successive generation and every successive destruction would be necessarily referable to real non-material conditions, equally unknown with those which give rise to its first

or original genesis. This would imply a continued operation of real conditions in the unseen world, carried on simultaneously with the existence of Matter as we conceive and think of it, reckoning from the moment of its first genesis, and employed in supporting or upholding it during its existence, after or in addition to producing it in the first instance.

But the same continuance of the unknown real conditions, which originated Matter, during its existence, and conditioning or supporting it, may be also inferred without having recourse, as above, to a mere possibility; it may be inferred directly from the analysis of Matter itself. The analysis which shows, that Matter is the coherence of parts of space, so as to occupy a certain minimum or minima of it adversely, holds good of Matter in every form, and at every period, of its existence. The *vis insita*, which is an essential element in it, is not derived from it, nor is there any necessity that Matter, once generated, should continue to exist for any given period, much less for ever, by any inherent virtue or vigour of its own. Its continuance as Matter, therefore, requires the continuance of the same unknown and non-material real conditions, which are required for its origination. Its continued existence is as much conditioned upon their continued operation, as its coming into existence was conditioned upon their originating operation. These conditions must therefore be conceived in their continuance as co-existing with Matter in time and space together, as well as preceding it in time alone. We must conceive, that there is no particle of Matter, during

the whole of its existence, to which these unseen conditions are not present, or in the continuance of which they are inoperative.

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In brief, the material world, which exists in space as well as in time, cannot be regarded merely as a link interposed between two worlds of non-material realities which exist in time only, and which it would thus serve to keep separate and divided, just as much as to connect. It must on the contrary be regarded as either surrounded, or penetrated, or both, by those realities which are the unseen conditions on which its genesis and continuance depend, and which of themselves form part of a continuous though unseen world, the existence of which is entirely independent of the existence of Matter, which it generates and upholds. As material beings ourselves, the unseen world must be conceived by us as present and about us now, in this material state of existence; and not merely as having once existed at an indefinitely remote epoch of the past, and again to exist only at an indefinitely remote epoch of the future.

§ 4. Its present and future relations to Infinity.

§ 4. It is through the inferred fact of the genesis of Matter in time, that we are carried over, from the consideration of its divisibility, to that of its extensibility in time and space, that is to say, its infinity and eternity in the more familiar acceptation of the terms, namely, in the direction of increase, or κατὰ πρόσθεσιν, the term *infinity* being applied in respect either of time or of space, *eternity* of course in respect of time only. Does it from the moment of its genesis onwards occupy infinite space? Will it from that moment onwards occupy infinite time?

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If, as we have seen reason to infer, there are real (though positively unknown) conditions of its genesis, it is clear that it has a beginning or beginnings in time, and therefore falls short of eternity, the infinity κατὰ πρόσθεσιν of time, *a parte ante*, or looking backwards from any present moment at which we may be considering it. Time and space being infinite, and also entering into the constitution of Matter, we are compelled to conceive time, and the analysis of Matter makes it most reasonable to conceive space also, as existing prior to the genesis of Matter, and as occupied, prior to that event, only by existents which are or contain among them the real conditions of its genesis, positively unknown to us, and possibly also the real conditions of these again, and so on in indefinite regress. The finiteness of Matter, in respect of its origination at some epoch or epochs of a pre-existing eternity, may thus be held to be established, and also, though with less certainty, its origination at some place or places of a pre-existing and infinite space. The alternative to this latter view is, to regard infinite space itself as coming into existence simultaneously with Matter, at some single epoch of infinite time.

But this reasoning does not establish the finiteness of Matter κατὰ πρόσθεσιν, either in space at any given moment of its existence, or in time *a parte post*, that is, looking onwards into the future from any given moment of its existence, taken as present. The question, then, is, whether there is anything to show that Matter, when once it has been originated at a point or points in time, and at a place or places in space, must be conceived as

limited in point of extension through infinite space, or of duration through infinite time, that is to say, throughout an endless future eternity.

Now as to the former point, I think it must be said, that the mere fact of a minimum of space being requisite for its genesis does not necessarily involve the idea of that minimum, or the matter which occupies it, being figured, that is, limited or bounded by a surface, and therefore finite; it is not thereby alone regarded as a material Atom; nothing whatever is implied as to its limitation in space, in the direction of increase or extensibility. It may conceivably have sprung into existence, throughout whatever space it occupies, even supposing it infinite, instantaneously.

Similarly with regard to the duration of Matter throughout an endless futurity, which is the second point to be considered. The fact that it has had a beginning in time does not suffice to show, that it must also have an end. We are not dealing with abstract logical conceptions and their relations *inter se*, in which character end and beginning are mutually explanatory opposites, and in that sense involve or imply each other, but with conceptions of real and concrete facts. It is a question of real conditioning that is before us. And clearly the same real conditions in the unseen world, which called matter into existence originally, must also be conceived capable of prolonging its existence so long as they themselves exist. Nothing whatever, therefore, is implied as to the future duration of Matter, by the fact that its existence, being dependent on real but non-material conditions, must be conceived as finite *a parte ante*.

As to both points it is of course true, that Matter must *de facto* be either infinite or else finite in spatial extension, and either infinite or else finite in future duration. But it is also true,—always supposing that physical science has no peremptory and decisive evidence to give upon either point, and so long as it has not,—that the contradictory alternatives, in each of the two cases, are equally conceivable; and that we must therefore be content to accept them as they stand, as undecided alternatives, and therefore as limitations of our knowledge, not attempting to found inferences concerning the unseen world upon either alternative, in either case, as if it were the truth, to the exclusion of the other. We cannot build upon probabilities in the Constructive Branch of Philosophy.

I have, in fact, nothing farther to add, on these points, to what I brought forward in the concluding Section of the Chapter on Logic (Book III. Chap. IV. § 7). Only it must be remembered that, supposing the infinite extension of Matter in space, and its infinite future duration in time, or either of them, to be the true alternative, this would in no way affect the difference between the necessary infinity of time and space, which is inseparable from them as ultimate elements and data of experience, and the merely *de facto* and conditioned infinity of Matter in spatial extension and future time-duration. Matter would not cease to be necessarily conceived as a complex and conditioned real existent, dependent both for its nature and for its existence upon real conditions in the unseen world, because it was, and was known to be, made infinite in these respects. The fact that Matter is

a conditioned existent is one thing, its mode of genesis, history, extension, and duration, as a conditioned existent, are another.

Now the line of demarcation between the seen and the unseen worlds runs between Matter on the one side and its non-material real conditions on the other. The effect, therefore, of supposing Matter to fill infinite space would be, that we could then conceive the existents of the unseen world as penetrating and sustaining it only, and not also as surrounding it. Similarly, from supposing it to have an infinite futurity in prospect the consequence would follow, that the seen and material world must be thought of as destined to exist as a material world for ever, that is, to co-exist for ever with the unseen world upon which it depends, and in the same relation of dependence.

CHAPTER III.

MATTER AS CONDITIONING CONSCIOUS ACTION.

§ 1. Practical Reasoning and Cerebral Activity.

§ 1. The foregoing Chapter has, I think, made it evident, that the material world receives its existence from, and thenceforward co-exists with, a real but unseen world, the intrinsic nature of which, apart from the fact of its existence, and of certain relations in which it stands to its conditionate the world of Matter, is not only positively and speculatively unknown to us, but is also positively and speculatively unknowable by any means within the reach of material beings like ourselves. And this will remain true, even if we should be able to ascertain some further general characteristics of the unseen world, by a purely speculative line of reasoning. The relations which have thus been shown to exist between the seen and the unseen parts of the Universe give a certain degree of precision to our idea of it as a whole. They enable us to conceive the possibility, that the seen world, which is the conditionate of the unseen, may in its turn be the condition of changes in the unseen, inasmuch as the fact of its genesis involves its incorporation with the unseen into one and the same organic whole or system. The mode in which such a re-action (so to call it) of the seen

upon the unseen takes place is, of course, entirely inconceivable by us, because we positively know only one of the agents between which the supposed re-action takes place. It is the very same circumstance which precludes us from conceiving the mode in which the seen world is generated and supported by the unseen, notwithstanding that the fact of its being so is placed beyond doubt. The fact of the action of the unseen upon the seen world, and the possibility of the re-action of the seen upon the unseen, are the limits of our knowledge of the Universe as a whole, so far as the line of purely speculative reasoning just sketched can carry us.

We have now to approach the subject from another side, namely, from that of Matter in its highest known development, in which it is the real agent in the conscious action of human beings, and so far as it is made known by the modes or forms of consciousness which it proximately conditions and supports; that is to say, by the emotions, desires, volitions, conceptions, and ideas, included in what has been described in Book III. as Practical Reasoning. We thus quit the consideration of Matter in its full extent, and betake ourselves to that of Man; and therein again our view is restricted, so far as Matter is concerned, to those cerebral processes which are the proximate real conditions of what are known, from the consciousness which attends them, as his highest conscious functions.

Whatever may be the results obtained by this mode of approaching the subject, they will add nothing to our speculative knowledge of the

unseen world. The addition, if any, which they will make to our knowledge of the Universe as a whole, will consist in showing by the analogy of what ideas and feelings the working of our cerebral mechanism compels us to interpret, or under what forms of thought, purpose, or emotion, it compels us to represent, that unseen and infinite portion of the Universe which is beyond the reach of our positive and speculative knowledge. I mean, that the results reached will be confined to, and make part of, our knowledge of the panorama of our own objective thought, as distinguished from our knowledge of the real object thought of, which is the really existent and unseen world. Just as in the case treated in the foregoing Chapter, we shall here also increase our positive knowledge of the relations between the seen and unseen worlds, but without obtaining any positive knowledge of the intrinsic nature or *whatness* of the latter. In the case of our knowledge of the material world, the fact, that matter as real condition is identical with matter as object thought of, required demonstration; but in the case of our idea of the unseen world, the very meaning of its being called unseen consists in the impossibility of a corresponding demonstration. We can demonstrate neither the mode in which the unseen world conditions the material world, nor the mode in which the material world re-acts upon, so as to condition changes in, the unseen world, though the fact that in some way or other it does so is placed beyond a doubt by the fact, that both worlds are real in the same full sense of *reality*, being at the same time closely connected parts of one and the same Universe.

The conception, that the unseen conditions the material world, involves the conception, that the material also conditions the unseen, in point of re-acting upon it, though not in point of originating its existence.

The nature of the unseen world thus escapes all positive and speculative knowledge on our part. The only ideas which we can form of it are formed in the course of practical reasoning, and have purely practical not speculative validity. To such ideas we are restricted, when thinking of its intrinsic nature. But these ideas are formed by the exercise of cerebral functions which are functions of the most complex physical structures known to us, that is, of matter in its highest known degree of organic development. They are also inseparably bound up with the exercise of purely speculative thought. And just as the exercise of purely speculative thought compels us to conceive the material world as the conditionate of the unseen world, which in its turn it re-acts upon and to that extent conditions, so the exercise of practical thought, determined by emotional interests under the guidance of conscience, and issuing in the formation of practical ideals, compels us to frame ideas concerning the intrinsic nature of that unseen world, which it necessarily includes in its purview, by virtue simply of its nature as a process of reasoning. Whatever idea we thus frame has practical validity only.

But this limitation does not imply, that the interpretation or conception of the unseen world so reached will of necessity be false. Truth and falsity attach only to speculative conceptions of

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actual facts or existents; and those conceptions which we now speak of can only be called false by mistaking them for speculative instead of practical conceptions. Their falsity, like their truth, in the strict sense of the terms, is precluded by the fact that they are not speculative conceptions at all. In other words, the characters of truth and falsity must be worn by them with a difference; as practical and not speculative conceptions, their truth consists in their adequacy, their falsity in their inadequacy to the reality which they are endeavours to picture, and which, either by positive experience, or by speculative methods founded on it, is and must for us continue entirely unknown.

At the same time we know, that these practical conceptions of ours must be inadequate representations of the infinite reality, concerning which they are entertained; for to assume their adequacy would be equivalent to assuming their truth. But the very point of the distinction between adequacy and inadequacy on the one hand, and truth and falsity on the other, lies in the fact, that in the former case we cannot compare the content of our finite conceptions with that of the infinite reality which they represent. This we are precluded from doing, because, beyond the fact of its existence and its infinity, we have no independent knowledge of that reality. These remarks will serve to make more explicit the concluding statements of a foregoing paragraph, to the effect that the conceptions of the unseen world which we form by way of practical reasoning belong to the panorama of our objective thought, as distinguished from the unseen world itself, which is its real object thought

of, and which they are in fact tentative efforts on our part to grasp and comprehend. The degree to which this purpose is attained could be known only by one who should have a perfect and positive knowledge at once of the tentative conceptions which embody those efforts, and of the infinite and unseen world which is their object. It is therefore wholly beyond the power of human thought to test either the truth, or the degree of adequacy to fact, of its own conceptions or ideas in this region.

Now all reasoning, it has been shown in Book III., is practical, so far as it is volitional, or involves choice; it is practical as a volitional process. But when it is governed by a choice, made once for all, to aim only at discovering truth of fact, it then becomes speculative reasoning, and as such is contradistinguished from practical reasoning in the usual and narrower acceptation of the term, namely, reasoning which aims at adopting the best alternative action in the immediate future. Speculative reasoning is also positive, when it is at once based on facts of actual experience, and aims at discovering facts which are capable of verification, direct or indirect, by other facts of actual experience. Reasoning of this kind, which is at once speculative and positive, is the common parent of the positive sciences; practical reasoning, in the usual and narrower sense, the common parent of the practical sciences, which aim at guiding and systematising human action. It is with practical reasoning in the narrower sense that we are here concerned, both because the positive and speculative knowledge which man can attain

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of the relations between the seen and the unseen worlds, in the strict sense of the terms, has been already dealt with to some extent in the foregoing Chapter, and because the bare power of volitional action or choice, which is common to both, is best seen when we abstract from and exclude that governing determination to aim only at discovering verifiable truth of fact, which is the differentia of all reasoning which is at once speculative and positive.

The conscious action which is thus defined as practical reasoning takes its origin, or begins to acquire that character, in the cerebral mechanism, and in the representations, ideas, desires, emotions, and purposes, which accompany and depend upon its active functioning. These cerebral processes and their conditionate consciousness it is, which together supply practical reasoning with its motive power, its represented motives, its reasons, its criteria, and its ends; a fact which is the ground of the Scholastic dictum, virtually true though expressed in terms analytically inaccurate, *Causa finalis movet non secundum suum esse, sed secundum suum esse cognitum.* The objects which, as practical reasoning, it deals with are part and parcel of its own panorama of objective thought. Ultimately, indeed, these objective thoughts rest partly on sense-perceptions as their necessary antecedents, and also are normally entertained and handled by practical reasoning with the ulterior purpose of modifying the real Course of Nature, which again is ultimately known and tested only through sense-perceptions. Still, as practical reasoning, it deals with that only with which it

deals immediately, namely, with the content of objective thought; and in so doing it is originated and sustained solely by the internal activity of the cerebral mechanism, not by afferent currents in nerves of sense, nor by efferent currents in nerves which stimulate non-neural tissues to overt motor action. And it is from this internal activity of the cerebral mechanism, the activity supporting conscious volitions, that we must conceive that re-action to proceed, which we conceive as the re-action of matter in its highest known development upon the unseen world.

In these respects it stands in strong contrast to positive and speculative reasoning, which deals with representations of objects in their objective character, or as belonging to the external and material world, and depends for its validity upon verification by direct sense-perceptions, by the combination of some of which its whole knowledge of external and material objects is in the first instance obtained. And all the material objects with which this kind of reasoning deals are, or contain, some portion of the real conditions upon which their being perceived as real objects depends; as for instance a tree or a stone is a real condition of its being perceived, as well as being a really perceived object. The perceiving, combining, and judging activities, taken alone, are all that positive and speculative reasoning has in common with practical. In its case, the content of the knowledge which those activities contribute to constitute is brought into the context of consciousness by means of the real objects of the knowledge, acting as real conditions upon, and in concurrence with, the

neuro-cerebral mechanism. Thus positive knowledge, partly contributed by real conditions external to the organism, is at once the foundation, the means, and the end, of the whole procedure. The real conditions, on the other hand, upon which practical reasoning depends, consist solely in the properties of the cerebral mechanism, and not in any positive knowledge of these, or even of their existence, as real objects. It is positive and speculative reasoning, of which they are directly objects. Indirectly, however, light is thrown upon them, or in other words, upon the Subject as a real agent, by an analysis of practical reasoning; and that by reason of the very fact, that practical reasoning excludes them as objects of its own pursuit, and does not make a knowledge of them any part of its own purpose or procedure. Practical reasoning therefore, in the narrow and strict sense of the term, is founded neither upon a knowledge of real material objects, nor upon a knowledge of the cerebral mechanism upon which it is itself proximately conditioned, but solely upon a knowledge of the emotions, desires, volitions, and ideas, which form part of its own redintegrations.

The question for the present Chapter therefore is,—What, if anything, does the analysis of the process of practical reasoning into its essential constituents tell us, concerning the way in which it compels us to regard our connection with the infinite and eternal unseen world? Or otherwise stated,—In what way, if at all, are we compelled to think of the unseen world, as often as we reason practically, in the strict sense of the term now defined; and what the features in the nature of

practical reasoning, which compel us so to think of it?

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§ 2. Again we must fall back on the analysis of practical reasoning already given in Book III., and more particularly in the Chapter on the *Foundations of Ethic.* Recalling that analysis, we see that practical reasoning is distinguishable into two main conscious acts or processes, first, acts of deliberation and choice which we call Volition, and secondly acts criticising choice, either at the time of choosing or in retrospect, which we call Conscience. It will be well to keep to this division of the subject, and to begin with acts of volition.

An act of volition or choice is the act of exclusively attending to one out of several contents of consciousness, and thus completing a process of deliberation, or comparison of the relative degrees of desirability of the several contents. Without the preceding deliberation, an act of exclusive attention to one out of several contents would not be an act of choice or volition. A volition is always forward looking, always determines an action, and the action which it determines always belongs to the same agent as the volition which determines it.

The contents of conciousness which may be compared, deliberated upon, and either rejected or adopted by acts of volition, are of every kind which we can in any way experience, or which can enter into our panorama of objective thought in representation, whether they are supplied by memory only, or by imagination. Whatever can form part of a train of association may be an object of volition, that is, may be selectively attended to,

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after comparison with other contents. The whole field of desires, emotions, and ideas, is the field in and on which volition operates.

Now the completing act of a deliberation, the exclusive attention to one out of two or more alternative desires, or desirable contents, does not, taken alone, suggest or tell us anything at all of its relation to an unseen world, or of the consequences of attending to any alternative which may be adopted by it, or of rejecting others. True, it is a forward looking act, not involving any foreseen limit to the content which it selects, or to the consequences which may ensue on its selection. The anticipation, either of a limit, or of there being no limit, to the content, or to its consequences, belongs to the deliberative process, of which the act of choice or volition, taken alone, is the completion. It is the deliberation which gives to the volition as a whole, including its completing act, its rational character, as an act of practical reasoning. It is in the deliberation preceding the completing act, and while the volition as a whole is yet incomplete, that the second act or process of practical reasoning, spoken of above, the act or process of criticism, or Conscience, comes in, when it intervenes at the time of exercising volition, and not as a separate and later act of retrospection.

But it is not to deliberation, though a rational action, taken alone, any more than to its completing act of choice taken alone, that we can look for any suggestion, much less for any enforcement of the idea, that the consequences of choice are endless, and that thus volition connects us with an unseen and eternal world. Deliberation alone is no more

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than a comparison of desires in their character of ends; that is, it compares desires, which are felt as motives, in respect of the comparative desirability of their satisfactions, supposing them attained. The idea of an end in view, some more or less definite goal, is always present to it, and beyond that end or goal it does not look. It is only when governed by the criterion of Conscience, the presence of which makes deliberation a moral as well as a rational action, that an endless vista is opened before the forward looking gaze of deliberation and choice, by the substitution of the criterion of an anticipated harmony in the character of the agent as the true guide of conduct, in place of any particular satisfaction which may be judged to be the greatest, or of the most desirable end at which the action can aim.

It is therefore to Conscience, whether we take it as entering into the deliberation which is completed by an act of choice, or as looking back upon and judging previous acts of volition, that we must look for any intimation of the way in which practical reasoning compels us to regard our relation to the unseen world, and indeed for any recognition of the existence of that world by practical reasoning at all. Conscience, as shown by the analysis to which I now appeal, is neither more nor less than that mode of reflective perception which has volitions or consciously selective actions for its object, which actions it judges as right or wrong, by comparing the kinds or qualities of the several desires, between which they choose by attending to one and dismissing others. The mere power of perceiving and discriminating the different qualities of desires,

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or desired feelings, is known by the name of the Moral Sense.

Considering conscience in this way, the analysis in Book III showed, that conscience judges acts of volition by the criterion of an anticipated harmony between the desires to be adopted or rejected by volition, in any given case, and the whole future conscious life and character of the agent into which, if adopted, they would be incorporated, thereby working mediately, and to some minute extent, a modification in the Course of Nature as a whole, which would be modified differently in case of a different choice being made. It was also shown, that the ideal harmony, conduciveness to which was the criterion of a right choice, was not a harmony in any positively imaginable state of perfection, either of the individual or of human society at large; or in other words, was not limited by any preconceived End to be attained by the choice; but was a harmony of desires, the satisfaction of which could be conceived as continuing endlessly, and in ever increasing intensity, without clashing with one another in the same individual, and without bringing different individuals, supposing them to act under the guidance of the same criterion, into collision with one another. In brief it was shown, that the nature of the End to be attained by right choice was determined by the Criterion which made the choice a right one, instead of the Criterion of rightness being determined by the imagination of any particular End, as for instance by the idea of a future Golden Age of human society.

In actually obeying the dictates of a conscience

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judging by this criterion, it was farther shown, that the ideas of infinity and eternity necessarily force themselves upon the consciousness of the individual who obeys them; since the anticipated harmony is always an anticipation, that is, always before him in the future, implying an endless series of actions on his part, building up and developing his character as a conscious agent, and always without setting up any particular ideal character as the final end to be attained or realised. It was farther shown, that he necessarily conceives this criterion of an anticipated harmony in the character as the basis of a moral law, or law of morally right as distinguished from morally wrong action, and this law not as the law for a world of material agents only, but as a law valid for himself and for all conscious agents alike, simply in that character, and therefore applicable to them whether material or immaterial, and whether existing in the seen or in the unseen world.

Moreover it was shown that, from noticing the ever increasing degrees of insight which we obtain, by the retrospective activity of conscience, into the nature of our own past actions, and the motives which were really operative in them, though unnoticed and even possibly operating below the threshold of consciousness at the time, we are inevitably impressed with the idea, that our whole course of conduct, down to the minutest circumstances of the real conditioning of the acts of deliberation and choice which constitute it, may be known and, as it were, witnessed by a consciousness other than our own, which may in the present be possessed of that complete knowledge and

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insight, to which we imagine it possible for ourselves to approximate only, though in an ever increasing degree, as our character continues to develop.

It is in this way that Conscience, which enters or may enter into all deliberation, and consequently into all volition, and must in any case enter into all retrospection upon them, compels us to conceive and interpret the nature of that infinite and unseen world, the bare existence or reality of which is made known to us by speculative reasoning, and incorporated with our positive knowledge of the material world, in the manner which I attempted to show in the foregoing Chapter.

The manner in which this is effected may perhaps be made clearer by two considerations. In the first place, Conscience when judging desires, motives, ideals, deliberations, and volitions, considers them only so far as they are immediately known to it in reflective perception, that is, are parts of the process-content of consciousness itself, in total abstraction from all speculative questions concerning their real conditioning, or that of the consciousness to which they belong; so that volition, with the feeling of effort which it involves, is or may be thought of as a real agency, and Self or Personality as a real agent, and that as the only real agency and agent with which it has to do. For Conscience stands in no real isolation from other conscious functions. Its apparent isolation is due to our discriminating and defining it as selective attention to a particular object-matter, namely, volitions, or consciously selective actions, (of which itself is one), thereby giving it the

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appearance of a separate function or faculty, complete in itself. In reality it stands in close connection and interaction with other modes and contents of consciousness; so that whatever positive ideas it seems to form or to possess of any or all represented objects (among which volition as an agency and Self as an agent are included), so far as these include a speculative element, are due, not to Conscience as a special mode of perception, but to association with the contents of those other modes of consciousness, with which the perceptive activity of Conscience is from time to time bound up.

In the second place, it is a consequence of the same total abstraction from all speculative questions of real conditioning, that the universality and eternity, which are involved in the criterion, or anticipated harmony of desires, are enabled to obliterate, in our practical thought, all difference between the seen and the unseen as separate worlds, and so make our present modes of consciousness appear as common to both, and our future or anticipated consciousness in the unseen continuous with our present consciousness in the seen world.

In short, whenever we submit our volitions to the guidance of Conscience, or whenever we criticise our volitions practically, that is, with a view to making them better, we imagine the existence of our own consciousness prolonged into that region which, in positive and speculative thought, we call the unseen world; and we also imagine that world as peopled by existent consciousnesses similar to our own, and for the same

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reason. Thus whenever we think of the unseen world, after having attained this practical idea, we think of it, in general phrase, as a World of Existent Consciousness, and conceive it as, in some way or other, co-extensive with infinity in time and space, and as, in some way or other, perceiving the actual realisation of that harmony of desires, alike in each of its individual members and between all, which to our present consciousness, in the seen world, appears only as an anticipated and ideal harmony, guiding our action by furnishing the criterion of right, and so constituting what we call the Moral Law.

Or again, in other words, the unseen world is then conceived and characterised, in point of nature, as a world wherein is or will be consciously realised the completion of that harmony between desires, and in and between characters, which as an anticipated harmony, and positively anticipated only as partially and immediately realisable, in some partial improvement in the agent's own character, is the criterion of morally right action.

And this conception, reached by practical and not by speculative reasoning, serves as our description or provisional definition of the unseen world, inasmuch as it is the only knowledge or positive idea of its nature, the *whatness* or content of its infinity, which we possess. It is the only means, or handle (to speak figuratively), by which we can grasp or comprehend its intrinsic nature at all; there is no other knowledge or idea by which we can control or test the validity of this; and this is a knowledge or idea which from the necessity of our nature, as reflectively perceptive and voli-

tionally active beings, we cannot avoid having, however much we may theoretically depreciate or despise it, as unverifiable by speculative thought or scientifically instituted experiment. It is a permanent and necessary idea of the infinite unseen reality, because it is founded in the nature of man, though not verifiable by an independent speculative knowledge of its object.

§ 3. Validity of this idea.

§ 3. We find, then, that we can trace our idea of the unseen world as a region of existent consciousness, like our own in its essential nature and law of being, but equally infinite and eternal with the unseen world itself, back to its positively known real condition, namely, the cerebral mechanism in that part of its functioning which conditions and sustains the most fundamental process in all consciousness, namely, reflective perception, of which self-consciousness in human beings is a mode. We have found that this idea is on that account a permanent and necessary part of our consciousness itself, that is, necessarily arises in it so soon as consciously selective action becomes distinguishable as a distinct mode of existent consciousness, so supplying an object, by being directed upon which we distinguish one mode or function of reflective perception as Conscience.

I mean, that this idea of the unseen world is, in virtue of its origin, something very different from a mere fancy or invention of poetical imagination, which we can entertain or dismiss at our pleasure. It is an idea which is bound up with the moral character of all volition, and therefore one which we cannot help forming, however much we may neglect it, or suffer it to be overlaid by other ideas

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and interests. The fact that consciously selective action has a criterion guiding its selection, and giving it a moral character as a selection between right and wrong, moral good and moral evil, together with the facts, first, that this criterion belongs to consciously selective action as such, that is, to the consciously selective action of all conscious beings whatever and wherever, and secondly, that it involves the idea of its own continuance as consciously selective action into an endless future,—these are not only facts which, before analysis, give rise to the idea of an infinite and eternal world of existent consciousness, but facts which, when distinguished and named by analysis, compel us to recognise the fact that they do so.

But in thus tracing back the idea in question to the cerebral mechanism which is the real condition of reflective perception, we are tracing it back to Matter, of which the cerebral mechanism, sustaining both conscious action and conscience which perceives and judges it, is the highest known development; and Matter itself, including its genesis and development, is, as we have seen, the conditioned product of that very unseen world, of which the idea in question is a conception and interpretation. It is thus a necessary and permanent product, but mediately, through the intervention of Matter, of that very same unseen world, which is the object thought of by it. Owing to this derivation, together with its own permanence and necessity in practical reasoning, the idea of the unseen world, as a world in which consciousness necessarily exists co-eternally with

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itself, has all the validity which from the nature of the case is possible, since it derives its origin ultimately, through Matter, from the unseen world which is its object thought of, although to confront it with its object thought of, as in the case of our positive knowledge of material objects, is impossible. In a word it has the validity which is derivable from a knowledge of its real conditioning, but not the validity which is derivable from an independent knowledge of its real object.

But if the idea is produced in the normal course of the development of the organised Matter which subserves consciousness, it would be a gratuitous and violent assumption to suppose, that here for the first time Matter operated to produce an illusion, simply on the ground that we have no other means, but the idea produced, of conceiving the nature of the reality from which it ultimately springs, and therefore of testing whether it is an illusion or not. If it be an illusion, it is at all events a necessary and uncontradicted one, and moreover one the genesis of which can be traced ultimately to the operation of the very object whose nature it enables us to conceive, and the existence of which as a reality is speculatively and independently ascertained.

Granting that the validity of the idea in question does not admit of verification, all that can be done is briefly to record the facts concerning its nature and origin, and allow them to make their own impression on the mind. Accepting or rejecting the validity of the idea is not a matter of speculative demonstration.—Matter, then, we may say, in conditioning conscious action, conditions also

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that mode of it, namely Conscience, which involves our conceiving the unseen world, already known by speculative reasoning to be an infinite and eternal reality, in the full sense of that term, as a world with which consciousness is bound up, as an inseparable co-existent. The one conception is reached by way of conscious thought, the other by way of conscious action. Neither conception can be verified by actual inspection, nor can the latter be demonstrated by speculative methods; but it agrees with the conception to which those methods lead, and indeed pre-supposes its truth. That is to say, the real existence of an unseen, infinite, and eternal world, as the real condition of the seen world, is proved by speculative reasoning; and then (its real existence being pre-supposed) the nature of that world, that is, the content of its infinity and eternity, namely, consciousness existing in ever increasing harmony, and possibly in modes of which we can now form no positive idea, modes which may be new both in respect of form and in respect of content, is the object of a conception necessarily involved in practical reasoning. Both conceptions are conditioned upon the same cerebral mechanism, which is Matter in its highest known development, and Matter is itself known by speculative methods to be conditioned upon the same unseen world to which both conceptions alike refer as their common object.

Briefly stated, then, our conclusion is as follows. The validity of the idea of the unseen world as a world of existent consciousness,—which, be it noted, is the equivalent of Aristotle's Νόησις Νοήσεως,—consists in the necessity wherewith it is

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bound up with the exercise of practical reason under the guidance of Conscience, not in its verifiability by being compared to the real nature of that world, as if this were something which could be speculatively known, and our idea were or professed to be a speculatively true conception of it. Our idea neither tells us, nor professes to tell us, how we are to realise, in positive thought, either the mode in which our own conscious existence can be prolonged, after death, in the unseen world, or generally upon what conditions the existence of consciousness in that world depends. These are questions concerning the order of real conditioning, on which it is not within the province or the purpose of practical reasoning in any way to pronounce. In short, our idea of the nature of the unseen world is not valid as a speculative, but as a practical idea, and yet an idea which, on that very footing, is at once uncontradicted and incapable of contradiction.

4. Re-action of Matter on the Unseen World.

§ 4. There remains one point to be spoken of, to complete the subject of the present Chapter, the question of the re-action of Matter in its highest known development upon the Unseen World. I thus exclude from consideration the re-action, if any, which the material world as a whole, or the whole course of its history from first to last, may conceivably have upon the unseen world, of which it is a conditionate, so as thereby to become a really conditioning link in the whole Order of Real Conditioning, which embraces both the seen and the unseen worlds. This question would be purely speculative, and therefore one which we have no possible means of answering, any more than we

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have any possible means of conceiving the mode in which the unseen world generates and sustains Matter, or the mode in which neural or neuro-cerebral activity generates and sustains consciousness in the material and seen world.

The re-action of which I now speak is that of Matter in its highest development only, that is, of the cerebral mechanism in originating and sustaining the conscious processes of practical reasoning, or rather of reasoning in both its branches, practical and speculative, so far as the latter is a volitional process. And the real existent upon which that re-action is exerted is the unseen world in its character or function of a Subject of consciousness, which we necessarily attribute to it in conceiving it as a world of existent consciousness, and in that character or function only. I say *necessarily*, because we know, from purely speculative considerations, that the unseen world, which as a whole generates and sustains the whole material world, is a real existent, or a world of real existents, in the full sense of *reality;* and if by practical reasoning we are led to consider it also as a world of existent consciousness, it is clear that, if and so far as we adhere to this supposition, we must also conceive it as an existent, or containing existents, which sustain, or are the Subjects of, consciousness. The unseen world, therefore, must on this supposition, which by itself is a purely practical idea, be conceived as the sustaining power of some form or forms of consciousness; while simply as a real existent, (the truth of which idea is speculatively demonstrable), it must be capable of some form of modification by the real

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forces operative in Matter, which is its own conditionate. If, however, it is only in its character or function of a Subject of consciousness that we conceive the real but unseen world, upon which re-action is exerted, it can be only in its character or function of a Subject of consciousness in its highest known modes of cerebral activity that we can conceive Matter as exerting that re-action, without having recourse to pure speculation concerning the possible modes of interaction between the material and non-material worlds generally. It is, therefore, in those highest known modes of cerebral activity, that the only re-action which can here come into consideration must be taken to originate.

The moment at which the re-action now spoken of must be conceived to take place, if at all, is the moment of that change in the cerebral process which is evidenced, in our consciousness, by what we call the act of choice or volition, whether that volition is taken as one which initiates and sustains, or as one which completes, a process of deliberation. This moment is the turning point, or point of change, in the cerebral process from being one of receptivity to being one of re-action or respondent activity, in the single but complex living organ which subserves the volition. The receptive part of the whole process is due partly to the then existing constitution of the recipient organ and partly to the action of other organs upon it; the re-active part, by which it responds to the impression received, is due wholly to the then existing constitution and vigour of the organ impressed and re-acting.

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Now the only positively known re-action of any living cerebral organ, which begins as an action of its own parts upon one another, a circumstance which it has in common with its receptive action, is primarily a re-action upon other parts or organs belonging to the same brain, and secondarily or mediately upon tissues or structures external to the brain, which are stimulated to motion thereby The primary re-action alone comes into our present consideration, being at once that upon which the consciousness of deliberation depends, and that with which all re-action *ad extra* begins; being (in other words) the initiation of all self-wrought change in the character of the Subject. But it is clear that we can have no direct perception, or positive knowledge, that this re-action produces any effect upon, or modification in, the unseen world, since we know it only through the consciousness of our own volition on the one hand, and through its effects upon our external or overt movements on the other. We can no more imagine or conceive a mode in which it should affect the unseen world, than we can imagine or conceive the mode in which the dependence of Matter on the unseen world is effectuated, or (it may be added) the mode in which consciousness itself is generated in the seen world by nerve or brain activity. The bare possibility of the former is all that can be inferred from the bare actuality of the latter, which is a fact arrived at by speculative reasoning in the way already set forth.

Whence, then, comes the suggestion of the idea, that the re-action which conditions and sustains volitional consciousness is a re-action upon the

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unseen world, as well as upon the seen and material world? The answer is again given by the analysis of Conscience. The desires and emotions which Conscience, in judging them, conceives as carried out or capable of being carried out to infinity, and therefore as belonging to the unseen as well as to the seen world, it also perceives as the desires and emotions adopted, or capable of adoption, by the volition of the conscious being, to which itself also belongs. The existence and agency of that conscious being, irrespectively of the way in which its nature may be imagined, that is, whether as material or immaterial, whether as a Subject or as a Self, are therefore implicitly conceived as extending to the unseen world, being inseparable from the volitional agency which adopts them. Thus the idea of the same Subject or Self continuing to exist in the unseen as in the seen world is part and parcel of the idea, that emotions and desires which arise and are chosen in the seen world can be carried out and realised in the unseen, their existence without a real agent being inconceivable.

It follows that any one who seriously attends to the dictates of his conscience will have the idea of his own existence in the unseen world, that is, the prospect of a future life after death, forced upon him by the mere consideration of the moral rightness or wrongness of his own acts of choice. He will then necessarily imagine himself as an existent consciousness, among others with which the unseen world will, as it were, be peopled, both his own and theirs having alike survived their disappearance from the seen world. This plainly involves the idea, that the unseen world will be modified by the

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have any possible means of conceiving the mode in which the unseen world generates and sustains Matter, or the mode in which neural or neuro-cerebral activity generates and sustains consciousness in the material and seen world.

The re-action of which I now speak is that of Matter in its highest development only, that is, of the cerebral mechanism in originating and sustaining the conscious processes of practical reasoning, or rather of reasoning in both its branches, practical and speculative, so far as the latter is a volitional process. And the real existent upon which that re-action is exerted is the unseen world in its character or function of a Subject of consciousness, which we necessarily attribute to it in conceiving it as a world of existent consciousness, and in that character or function only. I say *necessarily*, because we know, from purely speculative considerations, that the unseen world, which as a whole generates and sustains the whole material world, is a real existent, or a world of real existents, in the full sense of *reality;* and if by practical reasoning we are led to consider it also as a world of existent consciousness, it is clear that, if and so far as we adhere to this supposition, we must also conceive it as an existent, or containing existents, which sustain, or are the Subjects of, consciousness. The unseen world, therefore, must on this supposition, which by itself is a purely practical idea, be conceived as the sustaining power of some form or forms of consciousness; while simply as a real existent, (the truth of which idea is speculatively demonstrable), it must be capable of some form of modification by the real

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forces operative in Matter, which is its own conditionate. If, however, it is only in its character or function of a Subject of consciousness that we conceive the real but unseen world, upon which re-action is exerted, it can be only in its character or function of a Subject of consciousness in its highest known modes of cerebral activity that we can conceive Matter as exerting that re-action, without having recourse to pure speculation concerning the possible modes of interaction between the material and non-material worlds generally. It is, therefore, in those highest known modes of cerebral activity, that the only re-action which can here come into consideration must be taken to originate.

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thus in its nature and constitution entirely unknown to us, and affords no positive or speculative basis for that spontaneous and congenial imagination.

Besides this, we must also be on our guard against the suggestion which the compendious expression *the unseen world* may very readily convey, namely, that there can be but one non-material and unseen world, as there is but one material and seen world. For, in the infinite and eternal Universe, there may, for aught we know, be a series or hierarchy consisting of any number of unseen worlds, all alike non-material, all differing in kind from, though conditioning, one another, and all alike positively inconceivable by ourselves. This possibility is concealed, but not denied, by the phrase *the unseen world,* which simply describes worlds, whether one or more, by the one circumstance in which, if more than one, they stand alike contrasted with the seen world.

Lastly we find that a contradiction is involved, when we attempt to treat the idea of an infinite and eternal conscious being as a speculative and positive idea. This idea is that which is primarily suggested by Conscience, as the idea of an omniscient witness of our immanent acts of choice, and is the idea in which religion, properly so called, has its origin, as we saw in the preceding Book (Book III. Chap. VI. § 6). Nevertheless, when we try to realise it as a speculative and positive idea, we find that its realisation involves a contradiction. For to be thought of as a single really existent agent is to be thought of as finite, and this contradicts the infinity and eternity which we attempt to combine with our thought of such an

agent, in the idea in question. In other words, the idea of an infinite and eternal conscious being is one not positively realisable in thought.

Consciousness as a knowing, indeed, may be and in fact is infinite and eternal, in the sense of having the ideas of infinity and eternity as part of its content; as for instance when we embrace in one thought unfathomable depths of infinite space, or immeasurable periods of endless time; in both of which cases the idea of infinity, as transcending any limits we can draw in imagination or thought, is present to us. But though this consciousness is also an existent consciousness, in the sense of being a psychological reality, it does not carry with it the idea, either that it is infinite or eternal as an existent, or that the conscious beings, whose consciousness it is, are infinite or eternal. It is in fact to finite beings, that is, to ourselves, that we actually know it as belonging. The infinity and eternity of conscious beings, or of consciousness itself *qua* existent, is a wholly different matter. It is in this last named idea, taken as expressing a reality which can be speculatively and positively grasped, that contradiction is inherent.

It is perfectly true that, when once the idea of an infinite and eternal conscious being has been suggested to us by Conscience in practical reasoning and choice, we cannot avoid attempting to construe it intelligibly to thought, and to combine it with the idea of that real conditioning in the Universe, the reality of which is a speculatively ascertained truth. And the ideas and conceptions to which we come in the course of this attempt are of great value in rendering definite the concep-

tions which we cannot but entertain concerning the nature of reality, both in the seen and in the unseen world. But the attempt, whenever seriously made, invariably issues in making manifest our utter inability to grasp the nature of any existent which is, or is taken as, infinite and eternal.

Let us see what our inabilities are in attempting to conceive an infinite and eternal, which for brevity may be spoken of as an universal consciousness. And in the first place let us take it in its aspect or character as an existent. Here our thought, as the thought of finite and material beings, is plainly subject, not only to the universal fact of time-duration as an element in consciousness, but also to a time-duration in which the distinction of past, present, and future is necessarily involved. That is to say, we cannot but conceive the universal consciousness, since we are to conceive it as an existent, save as existing actually in the present, and as having had an actual past, and about to have an actual future, existence. I mean that, as an existent, it cannot be thought of as actually existing at one and the same time in what is, to ourselves, past, present, and future time. To think of it as an existent is to think of it as one object among others which the universe contains, and which, like other objects, has a history, consisting of its successive changes of state in time-duration. When we think of it as existing *now*, we identify its present moment of existence with our own present moment of consciousness, and both of these with the present moment of the existence of the Universe, of which both are parts. Every actually present moment of existence must be thought of as

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one and the same for ourselves and for the universe, and therefore also for the universal consciousness which, when taken as an existent, is taken as a part of, or particular object in, the universe, though one which shares in the eternity of its existence. And not only so, but the universe itself, when thought of as an existent, is *eo ipso* particularised, and must be thought of accordingly, that is, as having a history, some part of which is still to come, or in other words, is in the future, and not yet actually existent.

If indeed we take the universal consciousness as an existent in relation to space only, we seem at first sight to come nearer to a conception of it as an universal and existent consciousness; for we may then conceive it as belonging to the whole of the unseen part or parts of the universe, in one of which those existents are contained, which proximately condition the existence of the material or seen world. This would be to conceive, or attempt to conceive, the whole unseen world at once as the Subject or proximate real condition of the universal consciousness, and as containing the real conditions, both proximate and remote, of the seen or material world. But since space itself has no necessarily eternal existence, an existent consciousness, which is conceived only in relation to space, could not strictly be conceived as an universal consciousness. For there might well be existences both preceding and following it, of which it would be entirely unaware. It is, therefore, with its existence in time alone that we are really concerned, when we think of the universal consciousness as an existent.

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Looking, as suggested above, in this way at the universe itself in its entirety, and taking it as an existent, we see that we think of it as *one*, solely because it occupies, or exists throughout, a single time-duration. It must therefore be thought of as being a process, just as much as being a thing, or statical object; and, being both, it must be thought of also as changing together in all its parts; time, which is an inseparable element in empirical change and common to all changes, compelling this simultaneity. That is to say, it passes from state to state in and through a succession of present moments, every one of which is characterised as present solely by being thought of as existing simultaneously with some moment of an existing consciousness, which is the perception of it. And since only one time-duration is possible to thought, not only is it a contradiction in terms for any consciousness to think of another, or of the universal consciousness, as existing both in what is to it a now-present moment, and either in the past, or in the future, simultaneously; but also we are compelled to place ourselves in thought at a present moment, which is identical for ourselves and for the universe, and which is midway, as it were, between a past and a future time-duration, no absolute beginning or end of which can be in any way realised in thought. From this ever-moving mid-point of time, our own present moment, it is, that we are compelled to contemplate the universe of things; just as the location of our consciousness in a body, which is the constant central object of our spatial panorama, compels us to place ourselves in thought at the centre of the material world, and

indeed of space itself, to which no absolute boundary, and consequently no absolute centre, can be even imagined. We can no more think of the universe from a point beyond it, either in time or in space, than we can originally perceive or experience it from such a point. To transcend space in thought is only possible by thinking of it as having a beginning and end in time, while to transcend time in thought is a simple impossibility. Hegel's *Logic* is the best practical verification of this latter fact.

The universal consciousness, therefore, when thought of as an existent, must be conceived as one which has existed and which will exist in a series of successive actually present moments, stretching backwards into the past and forwards into the future, without conceivable or imaginable beginning or end. No absolutely first or absolutely last state of it as consciousness can be thought of as possible. In this circumstance of transcending all limits, initial or final, its eternity consists. This fact must be construed to thought in the very same way in which we attempt to construe to thought the eternity and infinity of time and space themselves, namely, by means of an attempted *progressus in infinitum;* and these, as we have already seen, necessarily escape our grasp; the fact that they do so being the very thing which the terms *eternity* and *infinity* express. No existent, then, which is taken as commensurate with infinity or eternity can ever be positively conceived as a whole. As an existent it is never complete. Consequently no positive and speculative idea of an universal consciousness as an existent, or in other words, of an infinite or

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eternal Conscious Being, can ever by us be formed.

But the case is very different, though not in its result for ourselves, when we take the same universal consciousness, not as an existent, but as a knowing; and here again it will be found, that the attempt to grasp it throws light on our conception of the universe of reality. Taking it as a knowing, we can readily conceive the possibility of its embracing *uno intuitu*, that is, in a single comparatively brief present moment of its existence as consciousness, the whole content of the universe in all its parts and details, and the relations between them, in what is, to our thought, past, present, and future time. What to our thought *will be* would then, to it, be present or past. That is to say, the distinction which we draw between past, present, and future, would for the universal consciousness cease to exist, and only that distinction between former and latter in time-duration would remain, which is a distinction necessarily involved in the nature of consciousness as a knowing, or apart from which it can neither be conceived nor experienced. It was in fact shown in Book I., that we add the perception of future time to our perception of time having only the distinction into former and latter, solely by exercising the psychological function of attention to an actually present moment of experience as it recedes into the past.

In order to frame the conception of this as a possibility, it is not necessary that we should ourselves conceive that which we conceive the universal consciousness capable of embracing in its intuition; it is only necessary for us to conceive

a consciousness analogous to our own, but with certain limitations removed, with kinds of sensitivity indefinitely multiplied, and with powers so heightened, in energy and rapidity of action, as to become united and, as it were, merged in a single capacity of immediate intuition. A knowing of this kind we can conceive as commensurate with, or adequate to, the infinity of the universe, in time, space, and content, which is the object of it.

We cannot, it is true, directly conceive infinity in the case of a consciousness which we suppose infinite as a knowing, any more than we can directly conceive it in the case of time, or of space, or of the universe itself. We are not required directly to conceive infinity in either case; but only to conceive the infinity in both cases alike as exceeding our own powers of conception in the same way, and for the same reason. That is to say, as already shown, it is only our perception or idea of the fact of infinity, that we can directly conceive, namely, the fact that it escapes the grasp of conception. But this inability we are in no way bound to attribute to an universal consciousness, provided we can show, what I think has now been shown, that the possibility of such a consciousness is conceivable without logical contradiction. For the inability in question, which in our case arises partly from the limitation in kind, number, and energy, of our perceptive capacities, and partly from the disparate nature of the two capacities of perception and thought, vanishes and disappears in the case of a consciousness, in which we suppose these two capacities merged and united in the single capacity of immediate intuition, and this single capacity

indefinitely enlarged. There then remains no difference, in point of extent, between the knowing consciousness and the universe which is the object known.

The difference between the knowing of the universal consciousness, so conceived, and our own finite consciousness is this, that any and every present moment of it, at and during which we can think of it as existing, we must think of as a knowing which covers, or may cover, the whole content of the infinite and eternal universe, past, present, and future, just as our own present moments of active perception and thought cover a memory and an expectation,—a memory of what has just been, and an expectation of what is just about to be, actually experienced. Time-duration is an essential and necessary co-element in all consciousness and in all objects. An infinite consciousness, taken as a knowing, is one which has or may have the content of infinite time, with all its time-relations, as the object of any one of its present moments; while, as a consciousness which is also an existent, it must also be conceived as existing separately from the objects which it contemplates. It is at once the consciousness, psychologically speaking, of a real Subject, and the knowledge of a real universe, objective to itself.

Considerations like the foregoing bring home to us the fact, originally disclosed by analysis of phenomena in their lowest terms, that time-duration is an essential co-element of consciousness, of experience, and therefore of reality; that is to say, is equally essential to consciousness as a perceiving or knowing, and to the contents or

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objects perceived or known, and is common to both. We cannot alter our conception of the nature of consciousness or of reality, by conceiving them indefinitely, or even infinitely, enlarged. But it is evident, that the Universe, or the Reality, which is the positively known object of an universal consciousness, that is, of Omniscience, is something very different from that which is the positively known object of finite intelligences like our own. In both cases alike the meaning of *Esse* is *Percipi*. Both objects are equally real, both are equally phenomenal, in point of nature. There is no so-called noumenal reality manifesting itself as a so-called phenomenal appearance. There is one and the same infinite, eternal, and real Universe, first as it is wholly known to Omniscience, secondly as it is partially known to finite intelligences. That is to say, there are two Knowledges of one and the same real Universe. Between the Subject of the universal consciousness and the Power which sustains the Universe, no finite intelligence can distinguish. But the knowledge possessed by or contained in the universal consciousness is the Truth. The true universe is the real universe as known to Omniscience; and even the conception of things as they truly are can by us be arrived at only through, or by means of, the prior conception of an universal or omniscient consciousness, inadequate as our conception of such a consciousness must necessarily be. For, as we saw at the outset, that we could not avoid approaching reality in its lowest terms from the subjective side, that is, by asking, not ambiguously what it is, but definitely what it is known as, so

also we now find with regard to reality in its highest terms, the actually existing universe of things, that what it is known as is the only meaning which any statement can have concerning what it is.

To Omniscience, then, that which to us has ceased to exist, and that which to us has yet to exist in the future, are the object of an actually present knowledge, are what was called, at the outset of this work, the content of an empirical present moment. To Omniscience, the past, present, and future of the Universe are distinct, as they are to us; but, being alike objects of a present knowledge, they are alike present; the past has not ceased to exist, the future is not yet to come; but to Omniscience the past, though past, will forever continue to exist, and the future, though future, has already forever existed; that is to say, they are forever present in Order of Knowledge, though distinct and separate, and perceived as being so, in Order of Existence. To Omniscience, the whole content of Eternity is a present experience, at whatever moment of past, present, or future time that experience may be taken as actually existing.

In the Universe, then, as it really is, that is, as it is known by Omniscience, there is no future time; all things are or have been. There is sequence, but there is no futurity. Whatever will be (as we apprehend it) already exists for Omniscience. But this circumstance, I mean the present or past existence of that which foreknowledge, as we call it, the foreknowledge of Omniscience, is required to perceive, makes no difference with

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regard to the agents or agencies, by which or by whom the existence of what has been, is, or will be, is brought about. The nature and the reality of those agents and agencies make part of the knowledge of the same Omniscience which knows their motives and their results. This was shown in the Section on Free-will, in Chapter VI. of the preceding Book. Foreknowledge does not imply predestination. It is only by taking Omniscience as a knowing, distinguished from itself as an existent consciousness, and therefore also from what we must conceive as the Subject of it, or as its proximate real conditions in the unseen world, that we arrive at the idea of there being no futurity for Omniscience, or that the conception of futurity is a limitation of knowledge attaching only to finite and material beings.

We must moreover conceive Omniscience as a knowing, not only of what we call the real conditions of events and objects in the material world, but also of what we must conceive as constituting the real conditions of its own existence as Omniscience. Yet its knowledge of its own real conditions, that is, of Itself as the knowledge of a real Subject, or Conscious Being, can in no wise be conceived as fettering, predetermining, or in any way influencing, the action of those real conditions which are its Subject, and constitute it an existent consciousness. Knowing alone, even when raised to its ideal limit, Omniscience, is no controlling or effectuating agency. At the same time we must also conceive, that the real agencies which, in the unseen world, support and are the Subject of Omniscience, are also the agencies by which the

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whole Universe, including this material world of ours, exists and is sustained in existence. Be these agencies what they may, they cannot be beyond the knowledge of Omniscience.

But though we can thus to some extent construe to thought the idea of an universal consciousness taken as a knowing, that is, conceive the possibility of it by analogy to our own finite experience, yet this evidently brings us no nearer to conceiving the nature and laws of that consciousness and its experience as a whole, than we were before. In order positively to conceive it ourselves, we should have to conceive positively not only its content, but also the eternity and infinity which that content fills, a task which we have already recognised as impossible. To say nothing of the probability, that other modes of sensibility or feeling than those of which we have any experience or imagination may exist, and not only so, but also other forms, or essential co-elements, of those modes of feeling, besides the forms of time and space, with which we are familiar. Besides which, we have also just seen, that we are under a similar inability to form a positive conception of the universal consciousness considered as an existent, since to do so would involve the contradiction of conceiving as limited, and therefore finite, that which *ex hypothesi* is infinite and eternal.

It is therefore plain on the whole, that we cannot have recourse to the conception either of finite conscious beings, or of an infinite and eternal conscious being, in the unseen world, in endeavouring to construe to thought the effect, or re-action, which practical action in the seen world

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may have upon the unseen world, the suggestion of which as a reality is due to Conscience. Where the idea of matter and of physical action fails us, there all possibility of construing the effect of known physical processes also makes default, and consequently there the road of speculative and positive thought is barred. From this, however, it does not follow, that no effect or re-action there takes place. The re-action may take place, though the manner of it is inconceivable by us, just as the action of the unseen in producing Matter originally must be conceived as real, though no conception of the manner of it is possible. Positive and speculative thought breaks down at this point, in both cases alike.

But now contrast with this speculative treatment of the ideas in question, and consequently of the Moral Law from which they issue, the opposite treatment of them as ideas of practical reasoning only. The function of a practical idea in morality is complete, when it serves as evidence of the moral goodness or rightness of the cerebral action on which it depends; or in other words, of a man's volitional action leading onwards, from moment to moment, the growth and development of his whole nature in a healthy and right direction. Conscience and its dictates are the strait gate and the narrow way leading to life, spoken of by Our Lord in the Gospels. The rightness of the action, the life which they at once evidence and prescribe in consciousness, are the true end which they subserve, not the attainment of a future state of happiness by renunciation of present enjoyment. The peace and gladness of mind which accompany

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the conforming to them are the reward which they promise, the sense of security which springs from eternity having been reckoned with, and included as an element in the framing of the dictates to which conformity is demanded. This is the reward they actually give in the present, and in giving promise for an indefinite future, not an assurance of the reality of any existent object, or future state of existence, in the unseen world, as if these were facts or objects capable of speculative demonstration, and therefore capable of being promised *in futuro* as objects of a contract. This distinction, or more strictly one which is its equivalent, between the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards of justice in the soul, is brought out forcibly by Plato, when, in his *Republic*, he makes Socrates first give an independent proof of the essential and inherent value of Justice to its possessor and practiser, ἐάν τε λανθάνῃ ἐάν τε μὴ θεούς τε καὶ ἀνθρώπους (Book II. 367 E., and again Book IV. 427 D.), and then show, near the end of the work, that the supposition so introduced was in fact an impossible one, owing to the constitution of the universe and the nature of the soul as immortal (Book X. 612 B. *et seqq.*).

The reality of the objects and states spoken of as belonging to the unseen world, in which even the existence of God is included, is matter not of the speculative but of the practical reason. The only evidence of their reality is the faith which springs from obedience to the dictates of Conscience. But faith is not therefore baseless, because its objects are not speculatively demonstrable, but become self-contradictory when thought of as objects of

speculative conceptions. It is from the attempt to change them into objects of speculative conceptions, that their self-contradiction arises. Though called by the same names, they are one thing as the objects of practically valid ideas, and quite another thing as the objects of speculative conceptions. What is perceived as infinite and eternal does not lose its perceived reality, because infinity and eternity cannot be conceived as finite.

Conscience commands our belief in those ideas which are involved in its own dictates, and in the anticipated harmony which is its criterion of right, and in that shape only in which they are involved in them. These ideas are part and parcel of the moral law. It cannot command belief in anything whatever as a speculative truth, nor yet in anything which, from its nature, might be an object of speculative demonstration. Objects of the latter kind must ultimately depend for their proof upon positively known facts. Faith, therefore, is sharply distinguished from speculative belief, and goes beyond it. Where speculation breaks down, from leading to contradictions, there faith holds fast, not to those contradictory ideas which speculation ends in, but to an unseen reality which, owing to its infinite and eternal character, is incapable of being comprehended by thought. Springing, as it does, from the perceived validity of the moral law, and commanded by it as a duty, faith takes in practice the very place which positive evidence occupies in speculation. Or, as we read in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."[1] In the

[1] Heb. xi. 1, Ἔστι δὲ πίστις ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων.

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place of realities which we are precluded from believing on speculative evidence, simply because we can form no positive conception of them, we believe in realities, which are more than what we can positively conceive, on faith, for which we have the warrant of the Moral Law. In this we are not believing in objects which involve a contradiction, but in objects which cannot involve one, because they are objects of which no conception can be formed; that is to say, we are falling back upon objects taken as objects of perception, prior to the process of limitation by logical conception being applied to realise them in thought. It is realities of this nature that are dealt with by practical reasoning, to which Conscience gives the law.

But Conscience, being the giver of a law determining both what we ought to do, and what to believe, as essential to the deed, thereby determines also what ought to be, so far as it is determinable by our action. When, therefore, we consider that the agent, to which this law applies, is Matter in its highest known form of development, it is practically impossible to regard action in obedience to it as without effect in that unseen world, which, equally with the seen world, is contemplated in the anticipated harmony, which is the criterion and essence of the law itself. Now the existence of the unseen world, though not the way in which we speculatively conceive its nature, is a speculatively demonstrable truth. Our practical conception of its nature is that which Conscience determines and commands.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN.

§ 1. Materialism untenable.

§ 1. The whole material world, whatever may be its extent in space, or its duration in future time, has now been shown to be the conditionate of, or dependent for its existence upon, realities or real existents which are not material, and the intrinsic nature of which we are unable positively to conceive. The Universe to which both these real worlds belong we know to be infinite both in time and space. But for that very reason we cannot positively conceive it, in its entirety, as a single real existent in the full sense, that is, as a Real Condition capable of action and re-action with other real existents; since, in the first place, being inseparable in thought from its parts, any supposed reaction of it as a whole upon any of its parts would in reality be an action of part upon part within it, and in the second, since, having no limits, it has nothing beyond itself upon which it can act, but contains within itself all real existents and all real conditioning.

It is only finite objects, or objects thought of as finite, that we can conceive as standing in the relation of real conditioning, or as it is usually called cause and effect, to other objects. To con-

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ceive the Universe as a single real existent in the full sense of reality, as we have hitherto understood it, is incompatible with the essential characteristics of infinity and eternity, which it possesses in virtue of its containing all that exists or can exist, either in time, or in time and space together; the name *Universe* meaning the object which is so thought of, and our thought being subject to the forms of time and space, which are co-elements in all experience, in the way which our analysis has sufficiently shown.

We can bring the material or seen world as a single existent within the limits of a positive conception, because, and just so far as, we conceive it limited, in time and space, by the unseen world as its real condition on the one hand, and as its real conditionate (so far as modified by it) on the other. But we cannot similarly conceive as a single existent, limited in time and space, either the non-material and unseen world, taken as the real condition of the seen, or the Universe which embraces both. It is only our perception or objective thought of these which we can positively conceive; and this we do, when we think of them as real objects of perception, and at the same time definitely note the fact, that in virtue of their perceptual form they transcend limitation in time and space. Our objective thought of the Universe, then, we can conceive, but not the Universe itself as the object thought of. The Universe is only not real as a really conditioning existent, because it is real as Objective Being.

Herein lies a final justification for our substituting the conception of Real Condition for that of

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Cause, as we found ourselves compelled to do in the foregoing analytical Books. The idea of the Universe, or Sum of Things, is necessary and unavoidable, owing ultimately to the fact of the unity and continuity of the formal element, Time, in all consciousness or experience. But we cannot conceive it as caused; for to conceive anything as its cause is *ipso facto* to conceive an existent, which as existent must be included in it. Neither can we conceive it as causing, for to conceive an effect is likewise to conceive an existent, which in that very character must be part of it. Our conception of the Universe, therefore, is a conception which includes all causes and all effects; that is to say, it is only within the Universe, and between particular existents within it, that a causal relation is conceivable. And this fact we express by substituting the term *real condition* for cause, because the term *cause* implicitly contains two unrealisable ideas, (1) that of a total production or creation of its effect, and (2) that of an originating agency which itself requires no accounting for, but may be taken as self-existent.

Assuming these two unrealisable ideas to be realisable, but only on this illusory assumption, we should imagine ourselves possessed of a positive and speculative knowledge of the Universe, which would then appear to consist of two separate parts, (1) a self-existent and creative First Cause, and (2) a dependent and created World. This speculative conception would then supply a type, to which our thought of the real Order of Nature would be constrained to conform; and what we now call Real Conditions would then be conceived as Second

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Causes, as indeed they still are conceived in Scholasticism, having an efficiency delegated to them, as it were, from the great First Cause of all things, the *Causa Sui et Mundi.*

As it is, the impossibility of speculatively conceiving a First Cause, without self-contradiction, necessarily throws us back upon a type of thought moulded upon the conception of Real Condition in lieu of Cause, a conception which, as our analysis showed, arises naturally and necessarily in thought, when that thought, originating in the form of a question, is guided solely by attention to the facts of consciousness as they are actually experienced. A philosophy based on the simple analysis of experience, without admitting any *a priori* assumptions, necessarily occupies, with regard to the whole of existence, the very same position, in point of kind, which experience itself occupies in the first and subsequent moments of consciously attending to its perceptual data, and forming conceptual notions therefrom. And this position, when conceived as occupied by a real percipient or Subject, being common to both modes of experience, will necessarily seem to both to be the centre of the universe considered as spatial, and a point midway between past and future eternities in the universe considered as existing in time; so that the regions which from time to time are imagined as lying near the periphery of the one, the beginning and end of the other, will normally seem to be the seat of whatever classes of phenomena are farthest withdrawn from the observation of such a Subject, and most out of reach of his conjecture. To such a Subject the conception of a First Cause must

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sooner or later appear as a violent and vain attempt to conceive infinity as finite, by way of bringing it within the compass of a finite human intelligence. We cannot in thought place ourselves, our thought itself cannot think itself placed, at a point of view which is either beyond the periphery of space, or beyond the beginning or end of time. The conception of infinity and eternity is itself a conception of the perceptual fact, that they transcend the limits of conception.

The same reasoning, it will be seen, applies with equal force to the conception of Absolute Being, or an Absolute Existent, as to that of a First Cause, whenever it is used as a definite conception from which to deduce or evolve the world as known by experience, and not as a mere synonym for infinite or eternal Being or Existence. It then contains the very same contradiction which has just been signalised in the case of a First Cause. For the definite meaning which is thereby given to the Absolute, and to which its apparently explanatory power is due, compels us to conceive it as finite, and therefore as no explanation of an Universe which is infinite and eternal.

If on the other hand we suppose philosophy to occupy the position, not of consciousness attending to, and forming conceptions out of, perceptual data, but of consciousness or experience attending to and forming conceptions out of already formed conceptions, such as that of abstract Being, and out of the process of conceiving, taken as revealing its own nature,—which I apprehend is the Hegelian position,—we thereby and *ab initio* depart from the method of analysing experience without

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assumptions, and we also find, that the particular assumption with which we begin, namely, that conceptions and conceiving are ultimate data, as well as instruments, of knowledge, will reproduce itself in our conclusion; that is, that our philosophy will issue in some apparently complete Concept, such as that of an Absolute Being, from which all its content may be again educed by thought, in the shape of conceptions of the particular phenomena contained in it. The whole character, the whole worth or worthlessness, of our philosophy thus depends, first upon our choosing or rejecting the method of analysing experience without assumptions, and secondly, supposing it chosen, upon our success in actually excluding assumptions from our analysis and subsequent construction. Experience, not assumption, is that which in the long run decides what we shall hold as truth.—But to return.

Our inability to conceive either the Universe or the unseen world as a single finite real existent makes no difference with respect to the fact, that the existence of the seen or material world is conditioned upon real existents, in the unseen world, which are not material. Matter is originally conditioned upon realities which are not material, for reasons already given; and not *vice versa*. In other words, Materialism as a philosophical theory is untenable. Materialism is sound in psychology, or as a psychological theory, because the existence of consciousness, or consciousness as an existent, in positively known individual organisms, is conditioned directly, so far as we know, or have means of knowing, upon organic

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and living Matter. But between Materialism as the basis of a psychological, and Materialism as the basis of a philosophical theory, there is an immense and profound difference. Psychological Materialism, according to which all positively known consciousness owes its genesis, its maintenance, and its development as an existent, to organised living Matter, does but serve to bring the consciousness of positively known living beings, man included, into closer connection with the unseen non-material world, seeing that it is upon realities belonging to that world that the existence of Matter itself is conditioned. At any rate it must be admitted, that we can realise in thought that connection far more vividly, because more intelligently, on this hypothesis, than on that of an immaterial agent of consciousness, which, as identified with ourselves, ought to be definitely construable to thought, but is not. Matter is the agent by means of which the powers of the unseen and non-material world are made known to, and govern, human consciousness; or, as it has been expressed in phraseology at once figurative and religious, the forces of Matter are the hands of the Living God. There is no part of the material world, however minute or however vast, to which the conditioning power of the unseen world does not extend. The *vis medicatrix naturæ* which physicians speak of, and the power sustaining Conscience, which redeems from iniquity by means of penitence and reformation of life, are different operations of one and the same conditioning agency.

Independently of the foregoing, there is another wholly distinct series of considerations, by which

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the untenability of Materialism as a philosophical theory may be shown. It is only for its genesis, maintenance, and development, as a real existent, or in a word for the fact of its existence, that Matter depends upon real conditions in the unseen world. Real conditioning in no case goes farther than accounting for the fact of the existence of anything at a definite place and time. It gives no account whatever of the ultimate nature or *whatness* of the existents which are conditioned, or, if these existents are composite, of the nature or *whatness* of their ultimate constituents. The nature or *whatness* of Matter must be learnt from consciousness as a knowing, and be given to experience only in forms and modes of consciousness. And this is true of both the analyses of Matter spoken of above, in Chapter I. of the present Book, that is, of its analysis as a complex of real conditions, as well as of what was there called percept - Matter. Force, coherence, resistance, occupancy of space, are all terms which have meaning only as expressing modes of consciousness; the experience which we have of them is itself consciousness; what remains is the *fact that* they are such as to be experienced as they are experienced, and analysable as they are analysable, both by the physicist and by the metaphysician. It is this fact which they owe to their real conditions in the unseen world.

From this it plainly follows, that Matter cannot be held to be explanatory either of consciousness or of itself. Its own nature must be given in terms of consciousness, one of the very things which Materialism, as a philosophical theory,

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supposes it to explain. It is therefore not explanatory of consciousness; and the same fact also shows that it is not self-explanatory. It is not the Cause of consciousness, neither is it *Causa Sui.* As a philosophical theory, Materialism consists of two fallacies; first, it adopts the Scholastic notion of Cause, instead of that of Real Condition, and secondly it holds Matter to be the First Cause of all things.

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§ 2. Some may perhaps think that, in the foregoing argument against Materialism as a theory of the Universe, the truth of its extreme opposite, namely Idealism, has been implicitly affirmed, as for instance, where it was said that force, coherence, resistance, and occupancy of space, are all terms which have meaning only as expressing modes of consciousness, and that our experience of them is itself consciousness. Whether this is so or not will be considered presently. First it is necessary to see, in what that Idealism consists, which is the opposite of Materialism as a theory of the Universe. It is rather a single tenet with its consequences, than a theory, which is intended by the term. There are many ways of working out the consequences of that tenet, that is to say, there may be and are many Idealistic theories, just as there are, or rather may be, many Materialistic theories, or ways of working out the primary tenet, that Matter is the *Causa Sui et Mundi*, the only real existent, generating everything else, consciousness included, out of itself. The primary tenet which constitutes Idealism I take to be, that Consciousness (in some one or more of its forms) is the only true claimant of that position

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and character, namely, that it is the only real existent, because the only self-existent, the *Causa Sui et Mundi*, generating out of itself whatever appears to be not-consciousness, as Matter, Force, Mind, for instance; any such appearance being therefore illusory. Idealism, therefore, as a philosophical theory, is not, as some might suppose, the opposite of Realism; but, somewhat like its true opposite, Materialism, puts forward, in virtue of its primary tenet, a claimant of its own, namely, Consciousness, to be the only Reality. Into the truth of this tenet, disregarding particular theories based upon it, we have now briefly to enquire.

The case in favour of it seems *prima facie* a strong one. First it may be said, that consciousness in some one or more of its forms is the only thing immediately perceived or perceivable; that both Matter and Mind, so far as the latter is distinguished from consciousness as its supposed immaterial Subject, are creatures of inference from forms of consciousness which are immediately perceived, and that their real existence can be verified only (if at all) by immediate consciousness again; and therefore that their supposed existence independently of the existence of consciousness is an illusion. In other words, it may be said, that they *are* that and that only, namely, complex representations, or systems of inferences, which they are immediately perceived or thought of as being, by consciousness working according to its own laws of perception and thought; which thus gives them that very appearance of externality to consciousness, which makes us imagine them to be real existents independent of it.

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Secondly, in support of this first contention it may be alleged, that our only definition of the term *existence*, the only meaning which it has, is *perceivability*, or presentability in some way or other, whether we call it perception or thought, to consciousness. For as to that reality which has been called in this work reality in the full sense, and said to consist in the possession of agency, or the character of being a real condition, this is admittedly an object of inference, and only as such is it presentable to consciousness, and thought of as really existing.

And thirdly, in confirmation of both the preceding arguments, consciousness, it may be said, is the only thing which cannot but be thought of as existing. A non-existent consciousness, or mode, or form, or content of consciousness, is a contradiction in terms. To be a *quale*, or to have a quality, of any kind is at least, and necessarily, to *be*.

On any of these grounds, much more on all together, it may be argued, as their inevitable conclusion, that Consciousness is the only Self-existent, and produces out of itself, according to its own laws, and in its own forms, whatever else we call, or include under the terms, *World* or *Universe*, as distinguished from consciousness. Such I take to be the case in support of the primary tenet of Idealism, stated as clearly and strongly as I can state it. Its effect may perhaps be summed up in the phrase, There is no Being but Knowing, or Being and Knowing are one and the same.

But the conclusion that Consciousness is Self-existent (much more that it is the only self-existent,

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which would follow from the same premisses) is not really warranted by any of these grounds, or by all of them together. It contains an idea which is not contained in any of the three reasons alleged in support of it, namely that of agency or efficiency; over and above the idea of *existing*, it contains that of *making* or *causing* to exist. It is true that this idea is learnt from consciousness, and true that consciousness exists; but from this it does not follow that the idea is applicable to consciousness itself, that is to say, is truly predicable of that as an existent, from which as a knowing it is learnt.

Let us take the three reasons severally, and begin with the last, which if valid, that is if it really carried the conclusion of self-existence in consciousness, would suffice to settle the whole question. Now it is true that consciousness (including the necessary members of its analysis) is the only thing which cannot but be thought of as existing, in the strict sense of this statement, namely, that to think at all is to think of some content of consciousness, or to have a content of consciousness in thought, a content which necessarily exists for that thought which thinks it. But does this imply that the content thought of exists in virtue either of some efficacy of its own, or of some efficacy in the thought which thinks it? By no means. And why not? Because it is nothing but the statement of a fact in the nature of consciousness simply as knowing, namely, the fact that all consciousness is reflective, objectifying its present contents as they recede into the past of memory. That is why all consciousness is neces-

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sarily thought of as existent; we call *existent* that which we perceive or have perceived. The existence of consciousness which we cannot but perceive implies only the perception of consciousness by itself, not, as the Idealist argument would have us infer, the causing of consciousness by itself, that is, its Self-existence. Perceiving it does not cause it to exist, nor does the perceiving cause the perceiving. That consciousness as a knowing, in which character it includes the perception of itself as an existent, must always exist, being self-caused, is a statement which requires separate proof, and no such proof is forthcoming. Our consciousness tells us that it always exists for us when we think of it, but not that its thinking of itself must always exist.

This leads us to the second of the three arguments alleged in support of the Idealist conclusion, namely that derived from the meaning of the term *existence*. Its only meaning or definition is *perceivability*. This taken in the widest sense of *perceivability* is perfectly true. We know existents, we experience existence, only by in some way perceiving them. These are the names which we give, first to what we presentatively perceive, secondly to what we infer that we should presentatively perceive, if we had suitable capacities and favourable opportunities for doing so. Perceivability is the mark by which we render definite our idea of existence generally. It gives its general idea, the *sine qua non* basis of our thought of it. We know from it, that existents must be thought of (if at all) as at least possibly perceivable. But does this exhaust our idea or our knowledge of

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what is included in the nature of existence, that is, in the existence of any existent or existents included under the general term? Certainly not. It is but one handle by which, as it were, we lay hold of them; it is not existents but our knowledge of them, or contact with them, which the general term *perceivability* expresses. We know them only by perceiving or thinking of them. There is something in the fact of existence, which the fact of perceiving or thinking it does not explain. We can never infer from the perceivability of existents, that perceiving, thinking, or being in any way conscious of them, either is or produces their existence. Our knowledge of them consists of consciousness, but their existence is their own. Consciousness tells us of its own existence, but never that it is the only existent.

Again, so soon as we take any moment or content of consciousness as an existent, immediately we find that the question *how it comes* arises concerning it. Now all that consciousness immediately tells us about this is, how it is perceived or thought of as coming, *how* meaning in what context it comes into our knowledge; not how it comes into existence, in the sense of what causes or conditions its arising above the threshold; just as all that it tells us of the moment or content itself is what it is perceived or thought of as being, namely, as such and such a content. But besides the content there is the fact of its existence, and besides its place in the context of consciousness, there is the fact of its coming into existence in that context, and this fact requires accounting for. That is to say, any and every content of conscious-

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ness must, as a particular existent, have some condition of its existence, over and above its *whatness* as a content, and its place in a context, of consciousness; and on this condition the mere fact of its coming into consciousness, or coming in a particular place of it, throws no light, for this is the very fact to be explained. The second reason, therefore, breaks down as completely as the one first examined, in its attempt to infer the Self-existence of consciousness from the known meaning of *existence* as a general term.

Coming lastly to the first of the three reasons which may be alleged in favour of the Idealistic conclusion, we find that, without the support of the other two, it has nothing to allege but a mere possibility, namely, that the appearance of externality to consciousness, or existence independently of consciousness, in what are commonly called real existents, may be produced by consciousness alone, working with and upon its own content by its own laws of perception and thought. For if those two arguments break down, the idea that consciousness is an existent which has agency of its own, operating by laws of its own, becomes a mere assumption, and one which is both gratuitous and violent. In consciousness as a perceiving, or as a thinking, or as a willing, there is literally no suggestion of agency at all, I mean no suggestion that consciousness itself perceives, thinks, or wills. By itself it is a perceiving, a thinking, and a willing; these are so many modes of it. By itself it is not a perceiver, or a thinker, or a will; it is a changing content, or a process-content, changing and proceeding, no doubt, according to certain laws, but

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still not laws which imply that consciousness is the source of the energy which is subject to them. The sense of strain or effort, experienced in attention, thought, and volition, which is sometimes held to be evidence of agency in consciousness, is, taken by itself, a mere quality of the process-content, just as pleasure and pain are. By itself, it does not suggest agency or energy at all; nor do these ideas arise, except as part and parcel of the idea of real agents, other than consciousness because conditioning it, whether these agents be conceived as material or as immaterial, as real matter or as real mind. There is, then, no reason to suppose that consciousness produces the content, the change, or the process, of which it consists. Consequently the conception, that what we call real external objects,—say for instance the solar system, —consist of, and are nothing else than, complex representations, or systems of inferences as modes of consciousness, in contrast to objects inferred by and from them, vanishes as a tenable conception; that is, cannot be positively construed to thought, for want of any conceivable agency in consciousness alone, by which the representations or inferences should be either originally produced, or subsequently combined or held together in single permanent complex systems.

It would seem, that there are two ways and only two, in which the fundamental tenet of Idealism might be established, the first positive, by showing that efficient agency is inherent in consciousness *per se*, the second negative, by disproving the possibility of a valid inference from the data of consciousness to any real existent other than, but

knowable by, consciousness, whether as a Subject or as an Object of it.

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But in neither way can the desired conclusion be reached, so long as actual experience is taken as the basis or starting point of reasoning. On this basis, the first line of argument leads directly to what is called Solipsism, the sole existence of an individual's consciousness, by failing to account, or find room in the universe, for anything but a single consciousness, conscious of itself; since whatever is apparently other than, must be held to be in reality a part, and that a created part, of the same single consciousness. For once suppose agency inherent, and known to be inherent, in an actually known individual consciousness, and every one of its contents or objects is *eo ipso* perceived as a product of its own. In such a consciousness, the persistent appearance (though false) of the existence of persons and things other than itself could not arise; and yet this is an appearance for which any theory of consciousness or of existence, based on experience, has necessarily to account in some way or other. Consequently the existence of this persistent appearance is a fact which ruins the validity of the Idealistic tenet.

Nor does the second line of argument succeed any better, supposing it to be founded on the same basis of experience. For in actual experience the distinction between consciousness and real objects other than consciousness originates, or is in the first instance drawn, only in and as part of the inference that real objects exist as the condition of particular experiences, experiences which, till then, were not specifically distinguished as *con-*

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sciousness. That is to say, it is the inference of the existence of objects as real conditions of experience, which originally enables us to characterise experience as consciousness, in contradistinction from objects which are not-consciousness. (See Book I., Chapters VII. and VIII). But to disprove the truth of this inference and exhibit it as an illusion, while retaining the validity of the distinction which depends upon it;—that is, to treat the existence of real objects other than consciousness as an illusion created by consciousness, from its coming upon the thought of objects which are not-consciousness in the process of arriving at self-knowledge;—nothing less would be required,—since plainly there is no other experience of reality to appeal to,—than the supposition of an immediate and constant perception, that nothing but consciousness, as distinguished from objects which are not-consciousness, can be an object of consciousness, or that nothing but consciousness, in the same distinctive sense, can be known to exist. But it is hardly necessary to say, that there is no such immediate and conscious perception. For if there were, not only could no controversy concerning Idealism arise, since its validity would be recognised, so soon as attention was called to it, as having the immediate warrant either of an *a priori* truth, or of an ultimate fact in knowledge, but even the genesis of the illusion of a reality other than consciousness would be rendered impossible, in the face of such an indisputable piece of knowledge.

Is there, then, no truth at all in the Idealistic tenet? This I am very far from saying.[1] I regard

[1] Compare my paper *The Philosophical Pons*, in the Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol. II., No. 1, Part II. Williams and Norgate, 1892.

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it as having one basis in unquestionable experience, though this it wrongly interprets and throws into confusion, from want of analysis. In my view, the distinction between consciousness as a Knowing and consciousness as an Existent is the first step towards the solution of the whole puzzle, or confusion of thought, in which Idealism originates. When it is said that anything exists independently of consciousness, it is consciousness as an existent that is intended, not consciousness as a knowing; the independence is independence in respect of existence, and the dependence which is denied is a dependence belonging to the order of real conditioning. Again, when we ask, whether the universe is in consciousness, or consciousness in the universe, the word *in* is ambiguous. The universe is in consciousness as a knowing; consciousness as an existent, that is, as the consciousness of any conscience being, is in the universe. The plausibility of Idealism consists in taking advantage of this ambiguity, or perhaps in being deluded by it, and asserting of consciousness as an existent what is only true of consciousness as a knowing, or subjective aspect of the known, namely, that it contains the Sum of Things, and gives its being, as such and such an object, to every object which it contains. The knowledge of existence in its entirety, not the existence itself, is what consciousness as a knowing contains.

I conclude, therefore, in opposition to the Idealistic tenet, that while consciousness is ultimate, unquestionable, and universal, as a Knowing, it also as a Knowing contains throughout, and in every instance of it, a distinction between *what* is

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known, or is the content of consciousness, and the *fact that* it is known, or that the consciousness of it exists; and farther, that this fact, this member of the distinction spoken of, being a particular fact without apparent reason for it, and not being accounted for by anything in the nature of consciousness as a Knowing, within which the distinction arises, is something which requires accounting for, if our desire of knowledge is to be satisfied, by way of inference from immediate data belonging to the content of consciousness as a Knowing, which data are in point of nature unquestionable. Thus the knowledge of the distinction in question proposes a problem to our desire of further knowledge, and of this problem it cannot itself be the solution. The problem is that of the real genesis, the real coming into existence of consciousness, together with its data or ultimate content as a Knowing. The problem may turn out not to be completely soluble. Assuredly it is not solved simply by being proposed, which the assumption that consciousness is self-generated is an attempt to do. To this view of the case I shall presently return.

So far as to the validity of the Idealistic tenet, treated simply as a conception. It will be advisable, however, to enquire how far it could go, supposing it were true, in furnishing an explanation of some familiar and undeniable facts of ordinary experience. It will, I think, be evident that in this respect also it breaks down, from being unable to furnish an explanation of some very simple facts. Take the case of what I have called percept-Matter. Suppose it to consist of

visual and tactual perceptions, or sensations. What reason, I ask, can any mode of consciousness afford, for perceptions or sensations so different in kind as those of sight and touch being experienced together, as they are in seeing and handling a material object? This is a case of simple fact, a simple occurrence. In the nature of consciousness, even assuming it to be self-existent, there is nothing which can explain or account for the simultaneous occurrence of these disparate sensations, nor, I may add, for the occurrence of any sense-presentation when and where it actually occurs, that is, for its place in a context of other sense-presentations, or contents of consciousness of any other kind.

So also with the perceptions, presentative and representative, composing physical matter, the case which was mentioned and postponed at the outset of the Section, namely force, coherence, resistance, and occupancy of space. Granted that these so-called properties of physical matter are severally known only as facts or contents of consciousness presented or represented, still the same question applies, and is unanswerable by any supposed self-existence of consciousness. How come they to exist together, so as to compose physical matter? Or in other words, How comes what we call physical matter to exist and operate as we experience it existing and operating? What law or laws of self-existing consciousness are there, which can be pointed to as producing it?

Or again take the case of sequences and combinations in spontaneous redintegration, commonly called association of ideas, including dreams as its extreme case in point of spontaneity. What agency

in a supposed self-existent consciousness determines the actual order, or disorder, in which its different contents, images, feelings, follow or combine with one another? How do we conceive the mode of operation of any such supposed agency? These are cases of fact, the fact of occurrence of certain contents of consciousness in a certain order. To classify them, by discovering certain uniformities which prevail among the sequences and combinations, is not to explain how the several contents come to occur in those sequences and combinations. That is a mere preliminary. They must be shown to depend on the nature of consciousness as a real agency, if they are to be really accounted for by a self-existent consciousness.

The truth is, no such agency of consciousness can be positively conceived. It is a mere word, a fiction of the hypostasising tendency. Consequently it explains nothing. If we hypostasise the conscious element or aspect in any particular function, say for instance in thought, perception, or volition, it will not suffice to account for the nature or the content of functions other than itself. If on the other hand we hypostasise consciousness in its entirety, that is, all its functions together, with their contents, then we leave nothing to account for; we have merely assumed that the Universe, being consciousness, is conscious of itself, or self-conscious, which is no reason for the existence of any individual consciousness, unless that individual be himself the omniscient Universe. That is the result obtained by Idealism, that is to say, obtained by assuming *a priori*, that consciousness exists, without first ascertaining, from consciousness, what

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the term *existence* means. Idealism converts the problem, which the Universe presents to us, into an illusion, by way of solving it.

Now the real nature of the problem which the universe presents for solution is well seen from those few instances taken from ordinary experience, which have just been mentioned, percept-Matter, physical Matter, and the sequences and combinations of spontaneous redintegration. For so soon as we take consciousness as an existent, whether it be the consciousness of a human individual, or the universal consciousness which is infinite in knowledge, we *ipso facto* propose to ourselves the question of the real conditions of its existence. The nature of the problem thus inevitably proposed consists in finding some positively conceivable existents or events, existing or occurring previously to, and independently of, those existents for which, as existents, we desire to account, and having contents which bear some constant relations to them. It is plain moreover, that, however far we may go in such a discovery of pre-existing real conditions, the same problem constantly recurs, the problem of accounting for the existence of the real conditions last discovered, by prior existents, and so on, in endless regress. The problem, therefore, which the universe presents to us is one which not only can never be completely solved, but cannot even be conceived as completely soluble by finite intelligences, since its solution would involve exhausting the contents of infinite time, infinite *a parte ante*, the contents of an infinite past.

But if this be the nature of the problem proposed, it is clear that the Idealistic tenet, which ascribes

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real existence to consciousness and to consciousness alone, is no solution of it, because, as all experiential knowledge of consciousness shows, the very attribution of real existence to consciousness raises of itself the question of the real conditions of its existence. Supposing universal consciousness, or Omniscience, to exist, then the first thing we want to know is, what are its proximate real conditions, and in what the nexus between it and them consists, or in other words,—How comes Omniscience to exist;—and this is just what no philosophy can tell us. That, as a fact, universal and omniscient consciousness exists, we have good grounds, drawn from practical reasoning, for inferring. But its real existence can be no solution of the riddle of the universe, unless we can show that, as consciousness, it contains the real conditions of its own existence, or in other words, is self-existent.

Is it, then, in any way possible to show this, namely, that consciousness as such contains the real conditions of its own existence? That is the central or pivot question, upon which the truth of Idealism, and with it that of any Idealistic theory of the Universe, ultimately depend. The answer must be, that this is wholly impossible without contravening the plainest distinctions of analysis, and attributing reality, in the full sense of the term, to that which, as an existent, has conditioned reality only.

Consciousness as such, or in other words, consciousness as a knowing, belongs solely to the Order of Knowledge. Taken in its entirety, or ideal completeness, it is, or at any rate includes, that Order; it is all knowledge, including know-

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ledge of itself as knowledge, and of its own existence as the existence of knowledge. On the other hand, it does not include the real conditions of its own existence, though it includes, or may conceivably include, a knowledge both of their existence and of their nature. Those conditions are real existents in the full sense of *reality*. And when it is asserted, that consciousness as such contains the real conditions of its own existence, the assertion is nothing else than an attempt to carry consciousness over, from the class of Real Existents simply, into the class of Real Existents in the full sense of the term, by obliterating the distinction beween the two classes of existents, and confusing it with the real conditions which it is asserted to contain. The ultimate root of Idealism lies in the indeterminatenesss of the conception, and consequent ambiguity of the term, *real existence*, together with the fact, that consciousness as an immediately perceived existent belongs alike to the order of existence and to the order of knowledge, or is objective and subjective at once.

Accordingly, the failure to discriminate real existents which, as existents, are conditionates only, from real existents which are real conditions, combined with the all-embracing character of consciousness as a knowing, and with the fact that it is a knowing of its own content and of its own existence, is the true account to be given of the way in which this confusion arises in the imagination of Idealists. Perhaps we may picture the process somewhat as follows: 'Just as the flame of a candle illuminates a space far larger than that which as a flame it occupies, and yet without the

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illumination we should not see the flame; just as the eye sees the world around it, an object far larger than the eye, which we know it includes; just as by memory and anticipation we embrace a past and a future time, though the memory and anticipation exist only in the present, which again is known to exist as present only by comparison with the past and future; so we may readily imagine that what some would call the real conditions of consciousness generally, which are but a part of that which consciousness embraces, are known to exist only as a part of knowledge, and so depend for their existence upon the existence of that whole of knowledge, of which they are a part'. By this or some similar process it is, that the imagination of Idealists is led to invert the true order of real conditioning, to put consciousness into the place of real conditions, and reduce real conditions to the rank of conditionates of consciousness. Briefly stated, Idealists mistake the fact, that consciousness is self-perceptive, for the very different fact, that consciousness is self-existent.

There is nothing but the analysis of experience by which this mistake can be corrected. That analysis shows, that consciousness cannot be thought of as existent, without being thought of as having some real condition or conditions of existence. The question is, what and where these real conditions are. In the case of human consciousness, we can to some extent answer this question. To answer it is the business of psychology. In the case of an universal consciousness which is omniscience, the question, as we have already seen, is not answerable by us.

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All the more is it incumbent on us to be on our guard against pretended answers, in which the human imagination is fertile. It is evident, that no answer can be satisfactory, which does not keep to the lines laid down by the analysis of actual experience.

Now so long as we keep to these lines, it is plain that consciousness cannot be thought of as being both consciousness and the real condition of consciousness at once. If thought of as consciousness, it is thought of as containing the knowledge, but not the existence, of objects generally. If thought of as the real condition of consciousness, it is thought of, or rather we attempt to think of it, as existing independently of its own existence, which it is supposed to condition, and this is plainly a contradiction, or logical impossibility. Consequently, when we think of consciousness as an existent, we must think of it as conditioned upon something which is not-itself. The self-existence of consciousness, which is the primary tenet of Idealism, is therefore a fallacy due to confusing, in thought, the existence of consciousness, in which it is both perceiving and percept, with the real condition or conditions upon which, in both characters, it depends;—consciousness appearing in the Order of Real Conditioning as conditionate only. So far, then, from containing a solution of the problem of the Universe, so far from discovering and naming the source or nature of the infinite and eternal Power by which the Universe is upheld, the Idealistic conception of the Self-existence of Consciousness, on the basis of which so many solutions have been

attempted, itself breaks down, from involving a logical contradiction, when the meaning of its terms is submitted to the test of analysis.

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§ 3. If we may rely on the reasoning of the two foregoing Sections, we may confidently conclude, that there is nothing, either in the Materialistic or in the Idealistic conception of the Universe, to invalidate or shake that conception of it as divided into two regions or Worlds of real existents, in the full sense of reality, the Seen and the Unseen, which we have derived from the analysis of experience contained in the three preceding Books. And the line of demarcation between those two regions or worlds, so far as it depends on definition, continues sharply drawn, in the sense that, apart from ideas derived from practical reasoning, we have positive knowledge of the seen, but no positive knowledge of the unseen world; of this latter we have only a knowledge of certain general characteristics, which may be inferred from its necessary relations to the seen world which we positively know. But when we come to apply this definition, so as to see what regions in particular fall clearly within the positively known world, we find that the line of demarcation begins to waver; we come upon a region or zone, as it were, of existence, which in some respects has the characteristics of the seen world of positive knowledge, and in others of the unseen and not positively known world; and which therefore seems to belong, now to the one, now to the other, according as we take into account now the real nature of its existents, now the lack of any definite or positive experience of them on our part.

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This region is that occupied or constituted by material existents and modes of physical force, which, although exerted by and upon matter, are at once beyond the range of our visual sensibility, and beyond the present reach of inferences from facts at present known to us, or based on any of the sensibilities which we actually possess. The line demarcating this region of Matter from that which is positively known to us is not a fixed one, but changes with the advance of scientific knowledge. Till recently the ether was on the farther side of it, but has now been brought within it. The ether is now generally held by men of positive science to be a material or physical substance, the seat and vehicle of physical forces, that is, to be a form of Matter. But the ether existed, as we cannot but infer, as a material substance, before its existence was held to be demonstrated, and independently of the demonstration. An instance covering so vast a range of phenomena as this illumines the whole history of physical and positive science. The material world as it really has been, is, and will be, must be conceived as offering a literally boundless field for discovery, that is, for a series of discoveries literally endless, in which new and more complete conceptions of its true nature are ever being substituted for old ones, thenceforward discarded as either erroneous or incomplete. There is, therefore, no denying the possibility at any rate, that countless kinds of material substances and physical forces may exist, and may have existed from the beginning of the material world, the nature and laws of which are entirely beyond the range, not only of our actual discovery, but even of our definite conjecture.

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A vast region of positively unknown material realities and physical forces must therefore be conceived as possibly now existing contemporaneously, and occupying the same portion of infinite space, with those which are now positively known to us. As material realities they must also depend upon the non-material realities of the unseen world, equally with those of which we have positive knowledge. The fact of our positively knowing or not knowing them can make no difference in respect of their being conditioned on the unseen. Their materiality alone is here the decisive circumstance. The realities of the region in question, therefore, share the characteristics of both worlds. As material they are excluded from the unseen, and yet they share its characteristics of being not at present positively known or even conjecturable. We have, however, an important clue to their discovery in the fact of their being known to be material, and therefore subject to laws of physical nature. They form, in fact, a region of Matter which is conceivably within the reach of positive science, and as such can only be properly treated as part and parcel of the material, and not of the unseen world, in the strict sense in which the latter term has hitherto been understood. It is to forces at present belonging to this unknown region of matter that we must look for an explanation of abnormal phenomena, such as those which are investigated by the Society for Psychical Research, in cases (if any) where the actual occurrence of the phenomena has first been placed beyond a doubt, and yet no explanation of them is possible by the action of any forces at present known to us.

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It must be noted, that no forces or substances which really exist in the unknown region of matter can properly be called *occult causes* of phenomena actually observed in the known region. The two regions are not distinguished from each other by anything in their own nature, but solely by the circumstance, that at any given time we have acquired a knowledge of the one and not of the other. It is additional knowledge on our part which carries over any force or substance from the unknown into the known region, or in other words, enlarges the known at the expense of the unknown. And this knowledge consists in connecting what was before unknown with some one or more of the forces or substances already known, by demonstrating, and verifying by experience, the relations in which it stands to them. The danger against which, in these cases we have to guard, and which is signalised by using the item *occult causes* as a warning, is the danger of hastily assuming the existence of forces or substances, the nature of which is due solely to our own imagination, as if they were already demonstrated, that is, brought into verifiable connection with known phenomena other than those which they are imagined to account for. Until the nature of a supposed force or substance is known otherwise than by the abnormal effects which are ascribed to it, its existence as a real condition is problematical.

The conception of an unknown region of matter has interest also in another respect, namely, because it shows the direction in which, subject of course to the conditioning action of the unseen world, we must look for any indication of the possibility of a

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future life for individual conscious beings after death. This direction has been several times taken, with reference to the question of a future life, or as it is frequently called, immortality; notably by Abraham Tucker, in his *Light of Nature Pursued*, Chapters XX. to XXIII. of the Section on Theology (Vol. I. pp. 381—494.—Third Edition, 1834); by the late Isaac Taylor, in his *Physical Theory of Another Life*; and more recently by the authors of *The Unseen Universe*, both of them men distinguished in physical science.[1] The hypothesis which I am about to bring forward does not aim at anything more than being one mode among others, in which we may conceive a real continuation of the conscious life and personality of individuals, in the unknown region of Matter, after their disappearance from the positively known region, consequent on the physical change of death.

The hypothesis which I am inclined to adopt, which does not, I think, differ essentially from that propounded by the authors of *The Unseen Universe* (see particularly Articles 197 to 203, pp. 200—202, of the edition cited), and which I put forward simply as a possibility, is briefly as follows: Those cerebral re-actions which sustain the volitions of a conscious agent, from birth to death, which are in fact the real agency upon which the states or processes of consciousness called volitions depend, I suppose to exercise an organising influence either upon the etherial substance which we may take as still belonging partly, or upon some other substance which at present belongs wholly, to the un-

[1] *The Unseen Universe, or Physical Speculations on a Future State.* By B. Stewart and P. G. Tait. Sixth Edition. Macmillan and Co., 1876.

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known region of Matter, existing within the brain, and the reaction of which upon the brain is not traceable by any methods at present known to us. The organising influence of these volitional re-actions continues throughout life, producing physical activities, possibly accompanied by conscious memory of their production, in the etherial or other material substance which it organises. During life there is no traceable reaction from this new organism upon the brain, within which it is being produced; but it becomes capable, on the dissolution of the body, of surviving as an independant organism in that unknown material region, to which the material out of which it was organised originally belonged, carrying with it the memory of those acts of choice, to which it owes its organisation.

Speaking in popular language of this new organism as a soul, we should have to say, that a man gives birth to his own soul by his own acts of volition, and survives the change of death as a soul which remembers those acts of volition, as its own history in a former state of existence. More literally, our meaning would be, that those same acts of volition, which during life build up a man's Character, Self, or Personality, also build up a new material organism within his brain, which after death becomes his body in a new life, or new state of existence, which, although material, is yet one of which we have no positive experience, and is subject to conditions widely different from those which are chiefly operative in his present state. His passage into that new state of existence would not be a passage into the unseen world, inasmuch

as his consciousness would continue to be directly and proximately conditioned upon matter, and not upon the non-material conditions of matter. He would be an inhabitant of a new, but still a seen world, and would still have an unseen world beyond him. At the same time, if we suppose Matter to share the infinity of Space, and the infinite future of Time, the series of his new lives, in new worlds, would be capable of prolongation throughout an endless futurity of existence.

§ 4. The Foundations of Theology.

§ 4. We have thus been brought back to the point treated of at the conclusion of Chapter III., the functions of Matter in its highest positively known form of development, in which it is the agent sustaining the highest forms of practical reasoning, conscience, faith, and the moral law. Two sources of our conception of the unseen world and our relations to it were discriminated and established in that and the preceding Chapter, one speculative, demonstrating the *de facto* existence of the unseen as a world of real existents which are the conditions of the seen world, the other practical, compelling us to think of it as a world of existent consciousness, although this fact is not speculatively demonstrable. Both lines of thought refer to one and the same real but unseen world, and both worlds together, the seen and the unseen, constitute what we call the Universe of Being.

One task alone now remains before us, that of seeing in what way the results at which we have arrived compel us to formulate the relations existing between those highest forms of human consciousness just spoken of and the unseen, infinite, and eternal Universe. This task, sup-

posing it to be carried to completion, and not merely sketched in its foundations and outlines, would be what is commonly thought of as a science, the science of Theology. It is with the foundations and outlines alone that I propose now to deal. This, however, will suffice to set the whole subject in its true light, and will be found to place what I venture to think the true mode of treating it in strongly marked contrast to that which has hitherto prevailed.[1]

Theology has usually hitherto been held to belong to the speculative part of philosophy. And inasmuch as it dealt with the nature and existence of the First Cause of all things, the *Causa Causarum*, it was necessarily conceived also as constituting its most essential and fundamental part, that which was indeed the basis of all the rest. Theology thus coincided with Ontology, the science of the first principles of all Being. No difference was made in it, in this respect, by the idea of a Revelation, which was, not of course originated, but definitely introduced into modern philosophical thought, by the Christian Church. What this idea added was simply the conception, that the First Cause was not an abstract Reason, or any other abstract function, but a concrete Personal Being, since a purposed revelation necessarily required a personal author. But the idea of a Personal Being who was the author of a revelation to man, as well

[1] As introductory to the present Section I would direct my reader's attention to Chapter IX., entitled *Ideas*, in my *Time and Space* (1865); to Sections 43—48 of Book I., in my *Theory of Practice*, Vol. I., pp. 305—334 (1870); to the concluding Chapter entitled *The Seen and the Unseen*, in my *Philosophy of Reflection*, Vol. II., pp. 232 *sqq.* (1878); and more especially to the Note *On the true Symbol of Christian Union*, in my *Outcast Essays*, pp. 183—205 (1881).

as the Creator and Ruler of the world, was equally speculative with the idea of a First Cause of all things. The effect of this so-called Christianising of Theology was simply to distinguish two departments in its speculative theory, where before there was only one; namely, first, the theory of the nature and existence of God as known by unassisted reason, which is sometimes called Natural Religion or Theology, and secondly, that of His nature and existence as made known by revelation, the latter comprising the whole Theory of His personal dealings with men, and of the commands which from time to time were the expression of His will concerning them. The final step, then remaining to be taken, was to bring the doctrines of these two departments into harmony with each other, on the lines followed by Greek speculative thought, and to effect their combination in such a way, that they might appear to afford each other a reciprocal support.

Now if the analysis contained in the Chapter on the *Foundations of Ethic* in Book III., and the reasoning based on that and other analyses in the present Book, are valid, there can neither be a valid speculative Ontology, or science of the first principles of Real Being, nor a valid speculative Theology, as the formulation of a Revelation on the part of the First Cause. And if so, then, since a speculative Ontology is an illusion, Theology, if there be any department of legitimate and valid thought, for which that is the only appropriate name, must be put on a wholly different footing. It must be based on practical and not on speculative reasoning. This the analysis which has now

been given affords valid and abundant means of doing.

The first decisive step in this direction was taken by Kant in his *Critic of Practical Reason*, but, owing to flaws in the speculative basis which he laid, the work still awaits completion at the hands of his successors, though gifted it may be with far inferior power. The fatal flaw, as it seems to me, which affects his doctrine of the speculative and the practical reason alike, is the assumption, that the distinction between Subject and Object is among the ultimate data, or originally known facts, of experience. From this flow at once the contradictory conception of Things-in-themselves, as Things real but incapable of being known, and the hypothesis of *a priori* forms of consciousness both practical and speculative. Once remove this flaw adequately and completely, as I trust it has been removed in the present work, that is to say, without re-introducing it in another shape, as by assuming the Identity of Subject and Object, or again by gifting consciousness, taken alone, with agency or active energy, which, as the analysis of experience shows, belongs only to certain of its objects; once succeed in basing all forms of knowledge on experience alone without assumptions;—then for the first time we shall set Kant's conception of the Practical Reason in its true light, and then for the first time see how and why it affords a valid basis for Theology, as the intellectual framework and embodiment of Religion.

We have seen that a religious faith springs necessarily and spontaneously from serious and active obedience to Conscience and the Moral Law,

or in other words, that morality cannot but give birth to religion, which is the practical conviction of the eternal validity and final triumph of those feelings and volitions which the Moral Law commands, together with all the happiness, both in degree and kind, which their undisputed supremacy involves. These feelings, the practical choice of which is the command of Conscience, and the triumph of which is the conviction of Faith, are known and experienced by us only as personal feelings, that is, only as felt by and towards persons. When we think of their triumph as founded in, and provided for by, the nature of the Universe, we cannot but think of the Universe as personal, notwithstanding that the attempt to realise this thought speculatively, that is, as a speculative and positive conception, necessarily breaks down and becomes contradictory, for the reasons already given. The contradiction does not lie in our feeling and acting towards the Universe as towards a Person, but in the attempt to comprehend the infinite and eternal Universe as the object of any definite and circumscribed conception whatever. Practically we know and feel, that the Power which pervades and sustains the Universe is a Power whose nature is summed up in the two master feelings of Justice and Love, and all which they either include or require.[2]

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[2] The following weighty words of Coleridge, written in later middle life, have fortunately been preserved and made public: "The more I read and reflect on the arguments of the truly philosophical theists and atheists, the more I feel convinced that the ultimate difference is a moral rather than an intellectual one, that the result is an x y z, an acknowledged insufficiency of the known to account for itself, and, therefore, a something unknown—that to which, while the atheist leaves it a blank in the understanding, the theist dedicates his noblest feelings of love and awe, and with which, by a moral

Observe the change which is thus wrought by the recognition of the fact, that our only knowledge of the nature of the unseen world, and therefore of the Universe in its entirety, comes from the practical and moral nature of man. Observe, I would say, the substitution, in our thought, of a single, personal, Divine Power for the Unseen World, which together with the Seen World constitutes the Universe, the Sum of Things, or Objective Being. We began the present Book with reasoning about the Universe; now we have substituted a single, personal Divine Power as the object of our reasoning. How and why is this? Simply because (1) we have no knowledge at once positive and speculative of the nature of the Unseen World, the unseen and non-material part of the infinite Universe, (2) because we have a positive but not speculative knowledge, founded on our own moral nature, of our own relation to that Unseen World. One point only in the infinite Unseen World is, as it were, illuminated by the light of Conscience, that is, of our practical human reason; and that point is brought into close relation to ourselves, and to the Seen World, to the exclusion of every other reality which the Unseen World may contain, but of which we have and can have no knowledge whatever, either practical or

syllogism, he connects and unites his conscience and actions. For the words goodness and wisdom are clearly only reflexes of the effect, just as when we call the unknown cause of cold and heat by the name of its effects, and *know* nothing further. For if we mean that a Being like man, with human goodness and intellect, only magnified, is the cause, that is, that the First Cause is an immense man (as according to Swedenborg and Zinzendorf), then come the insoluble difficulties of the incongruity of qualities whose very essence implies finiteness, with a Being *ex hypothesi* infinite."—*ANIMA POETÆ; From the unpublished Note-books of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Edited by Ernest Hartley Coleridge*, p. 285. Heinemann. London, 1895.

speculative. For us who recognise this fact, there is thus one Divine Power which sustains all things, distinct but inseparable, both from ourselves, and from the seen and unseen worlds alike, a Power known to us by Faith alone. In a philosophy founded simply on analysis of experience, there is no room for Pantheism, since it is only as different from ourselves and the seen world that the Divine Power is known to us; nor for Gnosticism, since we have no speculative knowledge whatever of the Unseen World, or the Existents therein; nor for Agnosticism (recently so called), since we have and cannot but have a practical knowledge of the Divine Power.

Now just as Ethic is the formulation and systematisation of the Moral Law, or of the dictates of Conscience, so Theology is the formulation and systematisation of the convictions of Religion or of Faith. It formulates the relation of man to God, as the infinite and eternal Power, whose nature is constituted by the attributes of Justice and Love, to which must be added, or rather in which must be included as an essential co-element, the attribute of Knowledge, in like perfection and infinity. To say that God is the name for the Power which sustains the Universe when so regarded, and to say that God is the object of Faith, is to say one and the same thing. Theology is the drawing out into a system of conceptions the practical faith with which we are inspired, when we make Conscience the guide of life. Theology is not religion, any more than Ethic is morality. It is the necessary intellectual embodiment or framework which religion receives from finite beings who reflect

intelligently on their own feelings, thoughts, and actions.

If this be a true account of what Theology is, it is evident that religion, or religious faith, can never wholly dispense with it. Some Theology or other, however rudimentary and undistinguished from other modes of thought it may be, Religion must necessarily have, in order to be realised in the Subject's own thought, and also in order to be spoken of and made a common object, concerning which men can communicate their thoughts one to another, seeing that the faith springs up in all alike, being founded in the nature of all as moral beings. Like every other department of philosophy, and like philosophy itself as a whole, Theology has a history and a development, beginning with the crudest forms to which we can trace back the course of human thought, custom, and institution; forms in which theology will be found undistinguished from other parts of the philosophical field, that is, from rudimentary forms of science and of law.

The thoughts and conceptions which are the embodiment of faith or religion are thus the only means by which we can lay intelligent hold of faith or religion itself, so as to construe to ourselves in thought its place and function in relation to other parts of our conscious life and knowledge. As these thoughts and conceptions vary, along with those belonging to the other departments of the philosophical field, from race to race, from community to community, and from period to period in the history of each, it seems as if the faith or religion, of which they are the embodi-

ment, must vary also. And to a great extent this certainly is the case, seeing that some forms are more favourable than others to the expression, strengthening, and encouragement of the faith which they embody. Nevertheless the faith or religion is essentially different from the intellectual form which embodies it, that is, from its theology; and supposing the faith to be lost or stifled, the theology is then theology no more, but continues to exist only as non-religious creed, ritual, or superstition. What anthropologists study under the name of religions are the various theological embodiments which religion has assumed, in different races or communities, and at different times, irrespective of their having ceased or not ceased to be the embodiment of a living faith. What is called the comparative study of Religions, including their history and development, is a study which falsely identifies, or at any rate disposes us to identify, religion with theology. It is a study of theologies under the name of religions. Similarly in our own case, by *Christianity*, or the *Christian Religion*, what is almost invariably intended is the Christian Theology. The name which most properly, or at any rate most markedly, though symbolically, characterises Christianity as a religion is the *Religion of the Cross.*

Now the intellectual material, or stock of ideas, out of which theologies are wrought, is the highest and most comprehensive set of philosophical conceptions concerning the Universe as a whole, which at any given time can be entertained by an individual, or be current in a community. These it is which determine the mould in which the

religion or religious faith of that individual or community will be cast. A theology therefore depends upon and develops *pari passu* with the philosophy, from which this set of conceptions is derived, or of which it forms a part. Though the religion and the theology, which is its intellectual embodiment, are mutually necessary to each other, and exercise a most important reciprocal influence, yet their variations are not strictly speaking simultaneous each to each, nor do they develop with the same degree of rapidity. The religion is founded in the moral nature of man, and in the moral character of individuals, and as a rule develops slowly, and is subject to great fluctuations in its strength and purity, both in individuals and in communities, in accordance with the healthy or unhealthy state of the moral life. The theology, which is the intellectual embodiment of religion, is founded in man's knowledge, and its development, normally speaking, is comparatively rapid. A rapid development of theology means, that many of its conceptions are becoming antiquated, or unfitted to embody the religion, while others are being formed which are more fitted for the purpose. This process would probably be accelerated by a considerable development or re-invigoration of the religion. On the other hand, a decay or decline of the religion would involve, not the development of the theology, but its destruction, that is to say, its destruction as a living theology, but its survival and possibly its development as a non-religious system of superstitions.

The fact that religion is rooted in the moral nature and character of man, while theology

depends upon his knowledge, is the circumstance which determines, and the key which enables us to comprehend, the true relation between them. Their relation is closely similar to that between emotions and the imagery which forms their frameworks, commonly called their objects, in objective thought. The difference is twofold, first, that the nature or character, in which religion is founded, consists, not of emotion or desire simply, but also of volition (which is choice between desires) and the criticism of volition by conscience; that is, consists of the very acts which constitute and mould the self or the personality; and secondly, that religion and theology are less closely bound up together than an emotion and its framework, since theology arises subsequently to religion, in reflection upon it, and then serves to incorporate it into an already existing intellectual scheme or system of knowledge, namely, the philosophy, or most general view of the universe, which may be entertained by the Subject at the time. The doubleness of source, which both cases alike exhibit, is far more marked in the more complex and developed one. The origin of religion can be traced to the action of the organism alone, with its dependent consciousness, that of theology to external circumstances, such as instruction, social institutions, and currently received ideas, acting on the organism, and appropriated by it. In short, we come back to what was said at the outset, that theology is part and parcel of a man's philosophy, while religion is part and parcel of his inherent character as a conscious agent.

If in the next place we look at the history of religion and theology in conjunction, in the case

which is most familiar to ourselves, namely, that of Christianity, we see plainly the philosophical origin of the theology. Historically speaking, this can with great probability be traced back, on both sides or in both lines of its pedigree, the Greek and the Hebrew, to sources in the animistic theories of a very early state of intellectual development. But with these origins we are not here concerned. Neither need we here consider what conceptions may have been taken up into current Jewish theological thought from Persian or other Eastern sources, during the Exile, or in succeeding times. It is enough here to state the fact, that one of the two lines of thought had long been, while the other was rapidly becoming, monotheistic, at the time of their coming into close contact, though in very different ways; the Hebrew in the very definite form of belief in a Divine Law governing all the relations of life, a law cordially accepted by the whole people, and dating or believed to date from a remote antiquity; the Greek only in the shape of theories belonging, not to the whole people, but to different philosophical schools, Platonic, Aristotelic, Stoic, or Eclectic, all bearing a monotheistic impress, though in different modes and different degrees of explicitness.

Now long before the birth of Christ, and as one of the consequences of the intermixture and multifarious modes of intercourse between the populations of different nationalities, resulting from the conquests of Alexander the Great, and the division of his empire, there had been in progress an assimilation on the part of Hebrews, more or less complete in different cases, of Greek ideas and

modes of thinking in philosophy and theology. The principal seat and focus of this assimilation was Alexandria, which in those times was the great centre of intellectual activity, and the chief meeting place of Eastern and Western civilisation. The beginning of this period of assimilation may be roughly marked by the production of the Septuagint, the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, a work the commencement of which is generally ascribed to the first half of the third century B.C.; while its close, prior to the introduction of specifically Christian influences, may be taken as most fully represented by the writings of Philo, whose birth is probably to be placed about 20 B.C., and whose literary activity extended over the first thirty-five or forty years of the Christian era. It was Philo's distinct and lifelong purpose to bring the records of the Hebrew Scriptures, including the whole Mosaic legislation, into harmony with the ruling ideas of the best Greek theological and philosophical speculation. The chief method which he employed for this purpose was to explain the expressions found in the narratives, descriptions, and injunctions of the Hebrew Scriptures as allegories of philosophical and theological ideas. The central conception of his system was that of the Logos, the Reason or Word of God. A body of theological doctrine was thus formed, which was capable of serving as a basis, or of being modified into a new body of theology, whenever such an impulse and motive should be given for it as was actually given by the life and character, the teaching and the martyrdom, of Jesus Christ of

Nazareth, the great religious reformer of Judaism.[3]

Up to the moment of the death of Jesus there had been, strictly speaking, no Christian theology; or if any, it existed only in the rudimentary shape of a belief in Jesus as the promised Hebrew Messiah, commissioned to establish the Kingdom of God upon earth, with Jerusalem as its capital. But the moment which robbed his disciples of their beloved Master roused them to sustained reflection. Where and what were the hopes with which their belief in him had inspired them? That reflection was the beginning of a Theology. The first belief, historically speaking, to take its place therein, the belief which at once revived and re-interpreted their belief in Jesus as the Messiah, and which together with it became the central nucleus round which crystallised, or out of which developed, in the medium of Greek or Greco-Jewish philosophical ideas, all the doctrines subsequently entertained by the Church as essential articles of the Christian Creed, relating first to the pre-existence, and finally to the complete divinity of Our Lord, was the belief in his resurrection from the dead, and continued life in the unseen world, as positive historical facts, in whatever sense those facts may have been imaged and interpreted.[4]

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[3] See *Philo Judæus, or The Jewish Alexandrian Philosophy in its Development and Completion.* By Principal James Drummond LL.D. 2 vols. Williams and Norgate. 1888.—See also for an excellent and vivid account of the social, political, and theological condition of Palestine when Our Lord appeared, *New Testament Times,—The Time of Jesus.* By Professor A. Hausrath. Translated by Messrs Poynting and Quenzer. In the Theol. Transl. Fund Library. Williams and Norgate. 2 vols. 1878—1880.—Also Dr Theodor Keim's admirable and elaborate work, *The History of Jesus of Nazara.* Transl. by Messrs Ransom and Geldart. Same series; same publishers. 6 vols. 1876—1883.

[4] See *The Apostolic Age of the Christian Church* (Book I., Chap. I.) By Professor Carl von Weizsäcker. Translated by James Millar, B.D. In the Theol. Transl. Library. Williams and Norgate. 2 vols., 1894—1895. The whole work should be studied.

Partially and in outline we can trace the earlier stages of this development, starting from that first and essential belief in the Resurrection, with the aid of the Synoptic Gospels and the Revelation of St. John, from the earlier form which finds its expression in the great Epistles of St. Paul, through the more technically propounded conceptions of the Epistle to the Hebrews, to a more definite and self-sufficing shape in the Fourth Gospel, read together with the First Epistle of St. John;—the Fourth Gospel bearing marks of being written, partly at any rate, with the purpose of combating some form or other of Gnosticism, by which the complete and equal divinity of Our Lord, combined with the reality of his existence as a human being, was either endangered or denied.[5] That is to say, we can trace the

[5] "With the name and notion of *Gnosticism*," (says F. C. Baur in his Church History) "we enter upon a totally different field of the history of the early Church from that which we have hitherto been discussing," (namely, the conflict between Paulinism and Judaism). "The question is no longer whether Christianity is a particular or an universal principle of salvation, or as to the conditions on which the Christian salvation is to be obtained. The practical interest is no longer that of breaking through and putting aside the barriers that impede the free and more universal development of Christianity. The circle of vision is completely changed. God and the world, spirit and matter, absolute and finite, the origin, development, and end of the world: these are the conceptions and antitheses into the sphere of which we are now transferred. In a word, Christianity is now to be apprehended not as a principle of salvation, but as a principle of the world."—And again on the next page, "Had not the idea that developed itself out of Christianity, the idea of the Catholic Church, overcome the particularism of Judaism, Christianity itself would have become a mere sect of Judaism. But on the other side, on the side where it came into contact with heathenism, it was threatened by a danger no less serious, viz., that ideas would come to operate upon Christian doctrines, under the influence of which they would fade away into vague and general abstractions, so that the Christian consciousness spreading out in limitless expansion would entirely lose its specific historical character. Now this was the tendency of Gnosticism, and the general account which we have to give of Gnosticism in view of this tendency is, that it regarded Christianity not in the first instance as a principle of salvation, but as the principle that determines the whole development of the world. Thus the interests out of which it arose were those of speculation and philosophy rather than religion; and it points back to philosophy as the highest outcome of the human spirit in the Gentile world."—*The Church History of the First Three Centuries.* By

progressive formation of Christian Theology, from its very beginning, in or by means of writings which form the bulk of that Canon of the New Testament, which at a later time, towards the end of the second century, was adopted by the Christian Church as the authoritative basis and test of Christian doctrine, and the universal adoption of which in that character rendered Christian Theology, as the intellectual embodiment of the Christian Religion, virtually secure. I think it must be said, considering the nature and the keenness of the philosophical and theological speculation which characterised the three first centuries of our era, that unless the Christian Church had seen her way to maintain the doctrine of the full divinity of Our Lord,—by which I mean, unless her doctors and rulers had been themselves intellectually convinced of the truth of that doctrine, and able also to defend it controversially,—a doctrine finally ratified as orthodox at the Council of Nicæa, A.D. 325,—the Christian Religion, of which the theology was valuable only as the intellectual embodiment, would not have been preserved as the sole universally professed religion, either of the Christian Church, or of the Roman Empire and of progressive civilisation. Without that doctrine the universal character and universal validity of the Religion, which it really owed to its foundation in the nature of man simply as a moral being, would never have been recognised.[6]

Ferdinand Christian Baur. Translated by the Rev. Allan Menzies, B.D. In the Theol. Transl. Fund Library. Williams and Norgate. 2 vols., 1878-9, Vol. I., Part III., pp. 184, 185.—In short the danger was, that the Christian religion should, through its theology, become absorbed, as a fully comprehended incident, into some plausible but perishable speculative theory of the universe, and share its fate.

[6] It lies entirely beyond my scope to enter upon the history of the Church,

§ 4. The Foundations of Theology.

Here, however, we are immediately concerned, not with the history of the Theology, but only with its foundations, that is to say, with the nature of the Religion, and the necessary connection of the Theology therewith. What, then, is that nature? It is in the first place a religion of Redemption or Salvation, the redemption or salvation of individuals from the power of moral evil in the heart, and its consequences. That is its central idea. The faith which redeems or saves is a faith which gives a man moral strength to obey the voice of Conscience.

But in the next place, what is the distinguishing characteristic of this faith, or in virtue of what specific quality does it possess that redeeming power; what more is it than the *possunt quia posse videntur* ('they can because they believe they can') of ordinary moral effort? Or again, in other words, where or what is the ultimate source of the redeeming power of faith itself? Here we reach the root of the whole matter, the distinguishing characteristic or speciality of the faith which is at once Christian and religious. It is faith in the love of God to the individual; or the love of God

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or of Theology. For the earlier periods, besides the works of Baur, Drummond, Hausrath, Von Weizsäcker, and Keim, already cited, the English reader may be referred to: *A Short Protestant Commentary on the Books of the New Testament, with General and Special Introductions.* Edited by Professors Wilhelm Schmidt and Franz von Holzendorff. Translated by Francis H. Jones, B.A. In the Theol. Transl. Fund Library. Williams and Norgate. 3 vols., 1882—1884;—*The Christian Platonists of Alexandria.* Being the Bampton Lectures for 1886. By the Rev. Charles Bigg, D.D. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1886;—*The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages on the Christian Church.* Being the Hibbert Lectures for 1888. By the Rev. Edwin Hatch, D.D. Edited by Principal A. M. Fairbairn. Williams and Norgate, 1890;—and, last not least, Professor Adolph Harnack's great work, the *History of Dogma*, (*Dogmengeschichte*). Translated by Neil Buchanan. In the Theol. Transl. Library. Williams and Norgate. Two vols. of the translation, 1894, and 1896, carrying it down to Origen, have already (1896) appeared.

to the individual, believed in and reciprocated; which alone has this invigorating and redeeming power. It is that alone which is Christian faith. It is not merely a belief in God as the omniscient and almighty ruler of the universe (an idea first suggested by the effort to obey the law of Conscience, in the way already explained), nor again is it even a simple belief in the love of God, or assent to it as a fact, but it is the immanent act of reciprocating that love as well as believing in it,—an immanent act which necessarily carries with it deeds, that is, overt or transeunt acts, also, which are the test of its genuineness.

The faith of the man lies, then, in his conscious and volitional reciprocation of the love of God, but the ultimate source of its efficacy, that which calls it into existence as a redeeming agency, lies not in the belief, but in the thing believed, the fact that it is *love* which is believed in, and that love the love of God, man's response to which is love and faith at once, a response whereby he places himself in conscious union and harmony with the Divine Object of his faith.

From the twofold fact, that this ultimate source both lies wholly beyond the man, and also, as the love of God, is unchanging and eternal, and therefore demands a response at every moment and in all circumstances, it follows, that the act of response, which is the initial act of faith, must be constantly sustained or perpetually repeated. Consequently it involves an immanent and permanent change in the dominant principle of life, a change from seeking the realisation of the ideals of the Self to bringing the Self and its ideals into conformity

with the will of God; a change of heart, μετάνοια, repentance, self-surrender. Love to God then becomes the *sine qua non* condition of the man's whole conduct.

From this the love of mankind also follows. For how can anyone, whose life is centred in the primal source of love and righteousness, indulge in enmity or even indifference to those who are objects of the divine love equally with himself? Love is the great subduing, transforming, and harmonising emotion in human nature. And it is love alone by which responsive love is awakened, or on account of which love is felt in return. Ultimately, therefore, it is the love of God for man, and that alone, which redeems the man; because that love alone calls forth in return that love of man for God, by which the man's whole nature is transformed. But to be efficacious in man, it must be appropriated by man, that is, believed in and reciprocated by conscious acts of will.

It would appear, that there is no human consciousness so depraved, that the thought of the love of God cannot occur to it, and consequently no kind or degree of abjectness from which the redeeming faith, founded on that thought, cannot uplift a man. Even at its first arising, and in moments at which (provided it be genuine) it is accompanied by the deepest sense of shame, humility, and unworthiness, it gives a certain sense of security, of dignity, and of hopefulness. It ennobles, even while it humbles. In repentance the man begins, or begins again so often as repentance is renewed, to feel himself in communion and fellowship with the sole almighty Power, and the

sole righteous Judge. His state in this respect has nothing to do with the estimation in which he may be held by his fellow-men. This was no doubt the hidden reason of Christianity spreading so rapidly as it did throughout the mixed and struggling populations of the great cities of the ancient world. A new life was laid open before every soul of them. For though founded in the strictest individualism, it was for that very reason universal, the same kernel of human nature being the one thing common to all individuals alike.

This is the true source and meaning of the universality of Christianity. It is not confined to men of a particular race (Jews), or of a particular degree of intellectual enlightenment (philosophers), or of a particular standard of moral attainment (the "ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance" of the parable); but is capable of arising independently from the emotional and volitional endowment of all men as men by nature, apart from circumstances of every other kind, whether of the organism or of the environment.

But since Faith and Religion have this emotional and volitional ground and origin, and do not rest on any calculation of advantages, or on any prior proof being given, that God will reward those who act in conformity to His will (for what proof of this is possible?), and at the same time are felt as ultimate and incontrovertible truth, or as a practical experience which carries with it its own justification, therefore they are felt to be a Revelation from that God whose love is believed in and reciprocated,—which is the origin of the whole matter. That which subjectively is Faith appears

objectively, that is, when thought of and reflected on as Revelation. It is in reality pure insight into the workings of a man's own heart, but at first unanalysed, and therefore not recognised as such.

Now the man who first awoke this faith and this religion in others, by his example as well as by his teaching, was naturally by them regarded as the Revealer of the Divine Nature. To himself also he must have appeared as in intimate communion with it. And alike to himself and his disciples, being Hebrews, and sharing in the Messianic hopes, he must have appeared, considering the final and completing character of the faith which he proclaimed, as the promised Messiah. Hence the first fruit of reflection on the significance of his life and teaching necessarily took the form, as we have seen that it did, of a Christology.

For, to go back for a moment to the prior history, the Christian religion, as distinguished from its theology, and at the same time considered in its history, or as a factor in the general history of mankind, is of Hebrew and not of Greek origin. Not that Conscience and religious Faith are peculiar to the Hebrew nature, and not part and parcel of the nature of men universally, but that, until the change wrought by Christianity, it was only in the Hebrew race that they had manifested themselves in sufficient intensity, and in a sufficient number of individuals, and those spread over a sufficient number of generations connected together by consciously preserved tradition, to give them that preponderance over the other elements of conscious life, which makes them its constantly ruling power, and imprints the religious character on a whole nation.

The assimilation spoken of above was not an assimilation of Greek on the part of Hebrew religion, but of Greek modes of philosophical and theological thought by Hebrew thought. Although the philosophical views of the Greek schools were all converging to monotheism, yet the whole unlearned population of every other race but the Hebrew was polytheistic and idolatrous. This placed them in the sharpest contrast to the Jewish people, among whom the strictest monotheism, the exclusive worship of one invisible God, to whom all images were an abomination, was cherished in the heart of every member of the community, learned and unlearned alike, and that not only in the character of an undoubting religious conviction, but also as the one great subject of national pride, and conclusive evidence of national superiority.

The existence of a religious and not merely a philosophical monotheism was, psychologically speaking, the necessary condition and basis of that peculiar and universal religion, which Jesus Christ founded on personal faith in the love of God for all his creatures, as of a Father for his children. From no other than the Hebrew race, or Jewish nation, is it conceivable that such a teacher should have sprung. And as a fact it was to this race and nation, and to the long series of its Lawgivers, its Psalmists, and its Prophets, that Our Lord Jesus Christ belonged, the Founder of Christianity, and himself the first and greatest in a long line of Christian teachers. To his teaching, and to his life and death as the exemplification of it, we owe the decisive recognition, as a distinguishable factor operative on a large scale in history, of that distinct and explicit

Faith in the identity of the law of Conscience with the ruling Power of the Universe, which is the Religion of Christianity, the religion in which love to God is at once the first duty and the highest blessing of man, the love of God to man having first been apprehended by faith, as an essential and immutable attribute of the divine nature.

What Jesus Christ did for man was to put them as individuals into conscious relation, or communion, with the almighty Power, that is, with God, by making them feel towards Him as a Loving Power; that is, by revealing Him as not only Power but Love; a revelation which Jesus Christ must have drawn originally from his own experience. This state of mind towards God, when operating as the actually dominant motive of conduct, *is* the Christain Religion. The point is, that Christ made men feel that God loved them first; "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (Luke xv. 20). Hence man has only to feel this love of God, and let it do its own work in him, by rousing responsive love and obedience, in contrast to the Stoic view, that man can raise himself to God, or rather to the Supreme Reason which is immanent in the Universe, by his own effort to keep the Moral Law. The originally passive attitude of receptivity allows the sense of love from God to man to become a strong actually and constantly operating motive of action, of love and obedience, robbing lower motives, which spring from sense, passion, and appetite, of their attractiveness. This is the essentially new point in the Christian Religion. Its distinctive

efficacy lies here. God comes down to men, seeks men; instead of, as in Stoicism, their seeking Him solely by following the idea of Duty, or obedience to the Moral Law of Conscience.

One mode of conscious communion, one response to the love of God, is Prayer for specific blessings. This is a reasonable action, and therefore possible to us as rational beings, not because we know the ways in which our desires or actions can influence the Eternal Being, or in which He can influence the Course of Nature, or ourselves as part of it, but because we know that, influence of either kind being possible, that is, the conception of it involving no contradiction, there is no efficacy, inherent either in uniform Laws of Nature or elsewhere, which can avail to preclude it. Laws of Nature have no efficacy apart from the Course of Nature which they characterise; they take their rise from it, not it from them. It has, I think, been abundantly shown in the Section on Free-will, in the foregoing Book, that the idea of a predetermined fatality in Laws of Nature is an illusion.

Now this Religion it was, which had virtually to master and subdue the then reigning philosophies or theologies, both Greek and Hebrew, that is, to convert them into a theology which should be the intellectual embodiment of itself. On the one side was the Hebrew or Mosaic Law, on the other were the Greek Schools, and Greek modes of speculative thought. We see the necessity for this creation of a new Theology in actual operation, in the case of St. Paul the Apostle of the Gentiles, who has left us his own description of the process in his own mind, as well as given us its results in

argumentative form, in his great Epistles. St. Paul's struggle was with the Mosaic Law, or Hebrew theology, first in his own mind, secondly in the minds of those Jewish Christians who did not recognise, that the universal nature of the new Religion was incompatible with the particular and exclusive character of the old Theology. But the same necessity must clearly have been operative in the case of those whose pre-existing theology was Greek. In their case the immediately felt incompatibility would arise, not from the exclusive character of the theology, but from the fact that it made no provision for the expression of those ideas and beliefs concerning the Person and Office of the Founder of the new religion, which were universally entertained by the first disciples, both learned and unlearned, as the most essential part of the religion itself.

But from both cases alike we gather this, that it was not only the unlearned or uneducated multitude with whom the new Religion had to find acceptance, in order to become the religion, first of the peoples included in the Roman Empire, and then of all those who trace back to it their civilisation. Unless it had clothed itself with a Creed, it could not have been recognised as a single and definite Religion; and unless it had framed a Theology out of ideas common to the reigning philosophical thought of the time, it could not have clothed itself in a generally accepted Creed. Had it not been for the Theology, of which that Creed was the expression, we should not now have been Christians. The formation of a new Theology acceptable to the learned, and capable of expression

in a Creed acceptable to learned and unlearned alike, was historically speaking a necessity for the new Religion, if it was itself to be preserved in existence, and a future of indefinite expansion laid open before it.

Now when it was the universally prevalent opinion,—an opinion held implicitly by the multitude, explicitly by those who were philosophically trained, but in one form or the other common to all alike,—that the nature of the Universe could be positively and speculatively comprehended by the human intellect, it was necessary to have recourse to that philosophical view for a Theology, seeing that without a theology the new Religion could not obtain a hearing, much less command acceptance. The new Creed had necessarily to be such as at once to embody the new Religion, and annihilate or dissolve the old popular superstitions, replacing them by a living and comprehensive theory, based upon conceptions current in the philosophy of the period then present.

But the philosophical opinion, that the nature of the Universe can be positively and speculatively comprehended by the human intellect, is one which, to say the least, is no longer capable of supporting a Theology for a living Religion. The Theology which it once provided is now no longer an organic embodiment, but a stifling encumbrance,

> "Like a rich armour worn in heat of day,
> That scalds with safety."

To identify it with the Christian Religion is to condemn that Religion as an antiquated superstition. The Theology of a living Religion must be drawn from the conceptions of a living Philosophy.

The Theology must be subservient to the Religion, not the Religion to the Theology. The wine of the Religion being always new, the skins which are to contain it must be perpetually renewed.

We see, then, that a Theology is necessary for a Religion, in order to make its nature distinctly apprehensible, first by its own disciples, secondly by those who are outside its pale. The Theology which is to embody a Religion founded in the nature of man, and therefore calculated for universal acceptance, must consequently imply no philosophical doctrine against the truth of which any valid speculative objection can be raised. For this reason it cannot consist of or involve any speculative and positive theory, either of the Universe, or of its Creator, as a single Existent, since we have seen that no such theory is possible. It must be a theoretical statement of man's practical relation to the Universe, as believed by those and those only who are believers in the Religion of which it is the embodiment, and must besides be incontrovertible on speculative grounds. The Theology must be at once speculatively incontrovertible, and an intellectual embodiment of the practical Faith.

But in order to satisfy these requirements, a Theology must rest on some positively and speculatively known facts, not on the fact of Belief alone; it must therefore rest on, and pre-suppose the truth of, some speculative and positive doctrine which expresses those facts, as the foundation upon which both the Religion and its Theology repose. We have seen what this doctrine is; it is the result to which we have already come, that the

Universe is an infinite and eternal Reality, the Unseen part of which sustains the Seen World, and yet transcends the intellectual powers of human comprehension. Faith or Religion consists in the practical confidence of man in the nature of that Reality, notwithstanding his inability to comprehend it speculatively or intellectually. Theology therefore, because it formulates this Faith, and is not a speculative theory of the Universe, as something within our intellectual grasp, belongs, like Ethic, to the practical and not the positive division of philosophy, to practical and not to speculative reasoning. The speculative and positive doctrine, on which Theology rests, is not itself theological, but purely philosophical. It is a speculative and positive doctrine affirming at once the reality of the Unseen World, and the impossibility of a speculative and positive theory of the Universe, as if it were a complete and finite Existent.

This fundamental and purely philosophical doctrine being thus clearly distinguished from the Theology for which it furnishes an indispensable support, it is necessary next to advert to its consequences, which are of almost equal significance and importance for Theology. They are so because they relieve religious faith, and the theology which formulates it, from a series of puzzles which are now seen to be utterly gratuitous and fictitious, but which have always hitherto been a stronghold of scepticism, being at once created by, and insoluble on, the assumption, that we can intellectually comprehend the nature of the Universe as a completed whole. Once remove this assumption,

as I trust it has been removed in the foregoing Chapters, at the same time establishing the reality of the infinite and eternal Power upon which the seen world depends, and it becomes impossible to treat that Power, or the Universe itself, as if it were speculatively and positively known to be a Person, or Personal Being. It remains so for practical, but ceases to be so for speculative purposes; the logical justification for which distinction is this, that it is by practical Faith alone that we attribute consciousness, and therefore the capacity for feeling and acting from personal emotions, to the all-pervading Power which sustains the universe. Philosophical analysis teaches us to distinguish two reasons or motives which may lead us to attribute Personality to any object; one lying in the personal nature of the emotions which we entertain towards it, the other in the imagery or intellectual framework under which we represent it. Of these the former alone is practically operative in religious faith.

In speculative thought, therefore, the puzzles which arise from the false assumption just noticed exist no more. And from this it follows, in Theology, that we cannot treat the positively known or knowable world as due to Design; or its Designer as a blundering mechanic; that the question *Why*, or *What for*, cannot be put concerning it; that the questions of the origin or purpose of Pain, and of the permission or creation of Moral Evil, as speculative questions, cannot arise; that the universal Power cannot be regarded as a hard Taskmaster who requires impossibilities of the creatures whom he has made, and then punishes

failure with endless torments; nor yet as a *Deus quidam deceptor* who makes a promise to the ear and breaks it to the sense, by inspiring hopes which are never to be realised; nor as a Ruler who, professing and promising to reward virtue and punish vice, does for the most part just the contrary. It will now, I hope, be clearly seen, that the expectation or demand of a positive and speculative solution of these and many other similar questions rests on the double fallacy, first, of assuming that the Universe is capable of being speculatively comprehended by the human intellect, and secondly, of regarding either the Universe itself when so comprehended, or that Power in it which is taken to be the Creator of the material world, as a "magnified man." They are questions which obviously take their rise in practical reasoning, and are then fallaciously assumed to admit of and require a speculative answer. The only answer which they logically demand or admit of is one to be given by practical reasoning, an answer in terms of the same kind as that in which they are put. And this answer is given by practical reasoning in its most comprehensive form, that is, by religious Faith. These and similar questions are therefore entirely excluded from Theology, which, as the formulation of Faith, is the formulation of what is a wholly practical, and not a speculative and positive, mode of thinking.

The Personality which our practical reasoning, under the guidance of conscience, leads us to attribute to the Divine Power which sustains the Universe, is both an idea, making part of our objective thought, which we have no means of

confronting with the real object thereby thought of, since of this we have no independent speculative knowledge, beyond the idea of Infinite Power, and is at the same time a revelation, made by way of the natural working of our own cerebral organism, of the nature of that Divine Power, so far as we are capable of receiving a knowledge of it.

Our objective thought of God as a Person corresponds to the Logos, or "Second Person" in the Trinity of dogmatic theology; that objective thought itself is the manifestation to man of the divine reality, which, otherwise than by such an objective thought, is transcendent and incomprehensible. We rely upon it as a true, though inadequate, idea of the divine reality thought of by it, because it is the product of that mode of Infinite Power which sustains and guides conscience, and the volitions which are in accordance with it. These volitions are the effective or efficient link which binds the human to the divine nature, the agency which produces as an existent that objective thought or idea which, as a knowing, is our objective thought of God, and in that character corresponds to the Logos of dogmatic theology.

When furthermore we contemplate by itself this special mode of infinite Power by which our volitions are guided to form our objective thought of God, and at the same time consider that objective thought as the subjective aspect of the object thought of by it, that is, of God himself, so far as we can think of Him at all, we cannot but recognise in it the real and efficient bond of union between those two aspects, whereby they constitute One indivisible

Being, the Unity necessarily involved in them, as in every instance of Identity. So considered, that special mode of infinite Power of which we are speaking plainly corresponds to the Holy Spirit, the "Third Person" of dogmatic theology. We cannot think of the Logos as our objective thought of God, without thinking of each as the opposite aspect of the other, that is, as together constituting one undivided whole. And this logically necessary Union of aspects in thought is also the efficient agency, by which the objective thought, which is one of the aspects, is actually brought to exist in human Subjects, namely, by the sustaining of their Conscience, with the Law or Criterion which is its guidance, and of the volitions which are in accordance with it.

The new shape thus taken by the traditional Creed is necessitated by the knowledge of the fundamental difference, in point of range, between man's purely intellectual capacity and the urgency of his moral needs. The thought of Infinity alone will satisfy the latter; and yet an Infinite Existent cannot be positively construed to thought. Hence the real object thought of by the idea, or objective thought, of the Divine Personality is, for man, an object of Faith, not of Knowledge; but of Faith inspired by that selfsame Infinite Power which the idea of Personality represents. The human character of God is all in Him which we can comprehend. Our only positive idea of God is as the "Son of Man," by whom all human beings shall be judged.

Briefly I may say, that the conception which I am endeavouring to set forth is founded at once on the universally applicable distinction between objec-

tive thought and object thought of, and on the distinction, similarly applicable, between metaphysic and psychology. In the traditional and dogmatic conception, the Divine Trinity is held to be a speculatively conceivable and objective Reality, existing independently both of the world and of man. The conception here advocated, on the other hand, may be stated as follows. In the first place, man's objective thought of God, namely, as a Person, is the revelation of the Divine Reality to man in the only way in which man can understand it, and contains no revelation of a "Second Person" within the Divine Reality. When we pray to God, we can only pray to Him as made known to us by that objective thought. Secondly, the bond, or union, between the Divine Reality and the objective thought which is at once the revelation, or knowledge, of its object thought of, and an objective thought actually existing in us, is a mode of that Divine Power which sustains the whole of Nature, and which in the traditional theology is called the Holy Spirit, or "Third Person" of the Trinity. Psychologically speaking, our objective thought of God is produced in us by the operation of the Divine Power, or Holy Spirit. Metaphysically speaking, our objective thought is our knowledge, or the revelation to us, of God Himself. I need not stay to point out the inseparability, for human thought, of these three aspects of the Divine Reality.

We have next another circumstance to consider. The Theology which is to formulate a Faith capable of universality must be expressed in terms which can be understood and intelligently accepted by the simple and uneducated, as well as by the learned

and refined; or rather, by those whose only philosophy is a common-sense view of things, as well as by those who have acquired a philosophy in the strict meaning of the term. Again, it must consist of statements which can be similarly accepted, not only by those who are content to rest blindly on tradition and authority, but also by those who, being trained in positive science, are accustomed to require positive proof before assenting to the truth of such facts and events as are of a nature to be demonstrated by positive evidence, if it were forthcoming, and from which they would withold their assent without such evidence, supposing them to be alleged to occur at the present day. It must therefore neither require nor exclude a profession of belief in what is commonly called the Miraculous.

Consequently it is not enough, in endeavouring to frame a theological doctrine capable of universal acceptance, to fall back upon what can be shown to have been the belief of the primitive Church, such as the Apostles' Creed; or upon an enumeration of doctrines which may be supposed to represent the Hebrew element in such a Creed, separated from the supposed admixture of later refinements or speculative ideas, introduced from Greek or Greco-Jewish modes of thought. Belief, for instance, in the miraculous Conception, Resurrection, and Ascension, of our Lord can neither be required as essential components of the Theology, nor disbelief in them regarded as excluding any one from Church membership.

And yet again another circumstance must be taken into account. The Theology, like the Faith,

must not by its form of statement exclude those whose practice falls short, even very far short, of their profession and aspiration. It must not be such as to include the good and virtuous only, but must leave a door open to the sinful, the vicious, and the frail. The Religion is a religion of Hope. The Theology which embodies it must draw no impassable line in this respect. The profession of faith must not be so formulated, either by word or by symbolic or sacramental act, as to be a profession of virtue. It must create no aristocracy of goodness. It is indeed an awful thought, that in an endless life is involved the possibility of an endless degradation to depth below depth of moral turpitude and corresponding misery, as well as the opposite possibility of an endless ascent in moral excellence and happiness; and moreover that the choice between the two, once made in the present life, may prove in fact to be never reversible hereafter. But this is no ground for making the formulation of the faith include a profession, that the right choice has actually and effectively been made. A profession of obedience, a promise of effort, is all that can be demanded as the condition of Church membership, provided only it be genuine and sincere.

When we consider in this way what is essentially required in a Theology which is to embody an universal Religion or Faith, rooted in the nature of man, and not derived from, though it is at once based upon and incontrovertible by, his speculative knowledge, it seems to me that we need no other theology than that which was held and employed by Our Lord, as the Founder of the Christian Re-

ligion. The necessary Theology, and the necessary Creed, or distinctive Symbol of Union among those professing the Religion, are one and the same thing. A very brief formula would suffice for their statement, such an one, for instance, as the following: *I believe in God Almighty and Eternal, to whom Our Lord Jesus Christ taught us to pray, as Our Father in Heaven.*

This by no means forbids any members of the communion holding any additional doctrines which have either come down to us from Christian Antiquity, or which they may find minister to their own edification or spiritual needs, so long as they are in harmony with this, or with some other similarly brief and comprehensive formula. No one can be called upon to surrender or relinquish doctrines or usages, to which he may be fervently attached, and which he finds conformable to his intellectual state, whatever that state may be. But it would clearly be out of harmony with the above or any similar formula, to erect the profession or practice of any additional and non-essential doctrine or usage into a *sine qua non* condition of communion, or to hold it as a belief or a practice necessary to eternal salvation. Our Lord has taught us, that eternal salvation depends on doing the will of God, not on professing the creed or theology which is the acknowledgment of the obligation to do it, or on performing acts which symbolise the acknowledgment. Much less therefore can any non-essential theological tenet or symbolic practice have such a necessary character attributed to it.

The time may yet come when the Christian Church may feel itself strong enough to avow,

what in view of the immense mass of its philosophically untrained members it would perhaps be impracticable to avow at present, that it possesses no speculative knowledge whatever, derived either from reason or from revelation, of the nature of the Divine Being, and in consequence to cease regarding a profession of such a knowledge, and of a belief in special miraculous interventions which depends upon it, as necessary to the preservation of the Christian Religion, and to its own preservation and unity as a Church.[7] In that case, a formula like the one proposed, expressing that simple faith in the teaching of Christ, which is in reality the root from which all Christian theology springs, would become the sufficient Creed of Christendom, as it was originally of the little group of disciples, which was gathered round their Master in Galilee and Judea during his life, and which his death cemented into closer and more conscious fellowship.

The Creed, or Symbol of Christian Faith and Union, is thus more than the mere expression of a Belief. It also expresses the adoption of a fontal principle of practice, the true meaning and significance of which must be learnt from historical records, and the application of which extends to every circumstance and condition of life. The ascertainment and application of the true meaning and significance of the Creed are the task of the theologian. In his hands the Creed becomes a Theology. The Theology is the expansion of the Creed. The

[7] At the same time the inevitable alternative must be remembered, namely, that to delay this avowal indefinitely is actually and in fact to identify the Christian Church with a creed which must sooner or later rank as an outgrown superstition.

means are at hand. The Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, especially those parts of it which were written by men who were either the actual precursors, or the actual first promulgators of the Christian Faith, whether we know them by their real names or not, has ever been, and must ever continue to be, the one indispensable source, from which the true spirit of Christianity must be learnt, and by the study of which it must be kept alive.

The criticism, exposition, and enforcing of what is therein contained will always demand, as heretofore, the life-long service of a body of men specially devoted to those purposes. The doctrine and discipline, of which the expanded form of the Creed, that is, of Theology, consists, are applicable to every incident and circumstance of life, in every form of human society. Their application will be, as heretofore, a constant and daily recurring need. At the same time, the peculiar position which Theology occupies among the other branches of human knowledge, owing to the unique character of Faith among all other modes of consciousness or experience, demands a special training for those to whom its exposition and enforcement are entrusted. It is difficult to see how this requirement can be met, otherwise than by the continuance of a professional and learned Ministry or Clergy. Like the other sciences, positive and practical, Theology requires a professional study, not the less but rather the more urgently, on account of the unique position which it holds among them.

It is in the way now briefly and imperfectly set forth, that, as it seems to me, Philosophy is the

handmaid of Religion; namely, first, by supplying the positive and speculative basis for a practical Theology, and secondly by analysing the positively experienced facts of practical reasoning, which are the material out of which Theology is constructed, as the intellectual framework or embodiment of Religion, the outward shape and form in which Faith comes into contact with the world, and is realised in the thoughts alike of those to whom it is comparatively a stranger, and of those in whom it is an indwelling spirit. Could we have a positive and speculative knowledge or conception of the infinite and eternal Universe, there would be no room for Faith or for Religion, as we now experience them. It is idle to conjecture what new forms they would in that case assume. It is with experience as we actually know it, with the facts of human nature as it actually is, that we have to do here, as in every other department which falls under the consideration of philosophy. These facts show, that the religious Faith of man, founded in his nature as a moral being, transcends the knowledge which his speculative intellect can procure, and anchors on the Eternal Reality beyond it. That this Faith is positively and speculatively legitimate and secure, is among the truths which it is the humble but welcome duty of Philosophy to ascertain and establish.

THE END.

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